LIVING LEARNING

A READER IN THEME-CENTERED INTERACTION

Edited By

Mary Anne Kuebel

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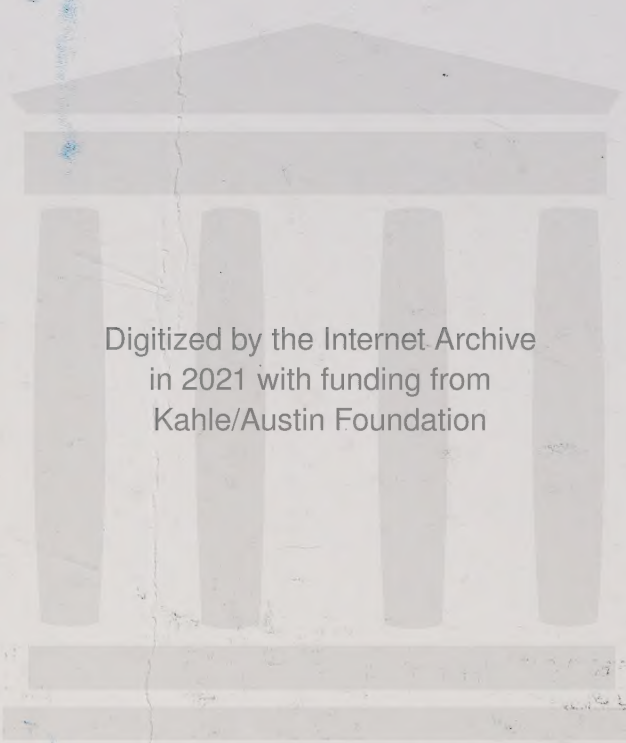

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A Reader in Theme-Centered Interaction

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of TCI were conducted from 1996-2000. More recently, such seminars have been conducted in cooperation with the Mahatma Gandhi University/Kottayam, Kamaraj University/Madurai, Tata Institute for Social Sciences (TISS)/Mumbai, Commonwealth Youth Programme/Chandigarh and the Association for the Welfare of the Handicapped/Calicut, among others.

By 1999 initial concerns about the applicability of TCI concepts and principles in the Indian cultural context had been resolved to the point that WILL-India was founded, and subsequently became associated with the international TCI training organisation, WILL-International, based in Switzerland. By early 2001 several hundred professionals in India had been exposed to TCI and the first annual conference in Coimbatore with the theme "Living Learning for the New Millennium," inaugurated by Dr. Cyriac Thomas, Vice Chancellor, Mahatma Gandhi University, attracted 90 participants.

This success story has been accompanied by an increasing demand for written materials about TCI. Most available books and articles are in the German language. Therefore, I approached Dr. Ruth C. Cohn, the founder of TCI, about the possibility of translating some of the wealth of TCI literature. I have been working closely with her since then to achieve this goal. This book, which is designed as a reader in Theme-Centered Interaction, contains these translations. It also contains a selection of articles that originally appeared in English (which are difficult to get at).

Some of the articles in this collection serve as an introduction to the basic TCI concepts, while some others focus on our specific concerns and still others concentrate on providing examples, suggestions and aids in practising TCI. Readers are invited to begin with the overview and then move on to any article, according to their interests and their present level of exposure to TCI. Each article offers a special opportunity to deepen the reader's knowledge and to stimulate new ways of viewing experience, leading to positive

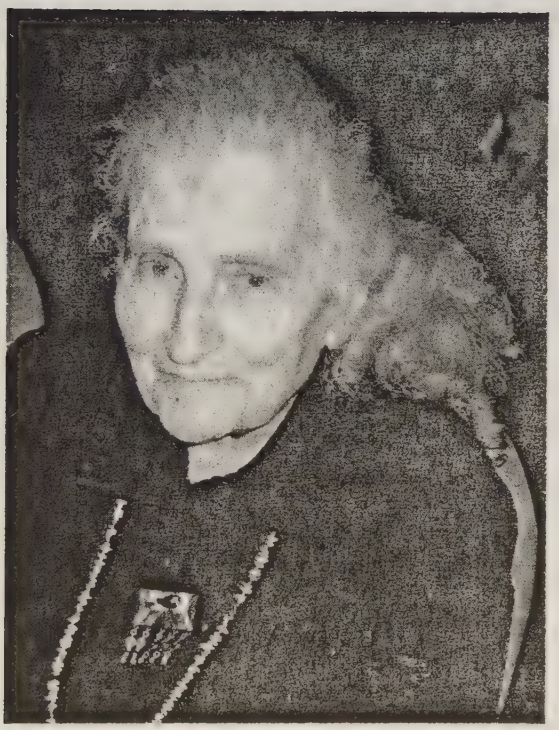
behavioural change. The occasionally differing perspectives of the authors - all within the large TCI world view - will hopefully challenge the reader to configure a concept which is relevant to her/his own beliefs and convictions. All contributions in this collection try to establish the fact that Theme-Centered Interaction is a valuable tool in human relations, education and communication. Some of the specific thoughts could be summed up as follows.

- Using the TCI system encourages the practice of democracy and provides useful ground rules in pursuing democratic goals. Respect for one's self, for others, and for the common task is central issue.
- TCI strengthens the ability of the individual to realise his or her specific potential together with other individuals in the group, thereby strengthening the potential of the group as a whole. Thus: "The whole is more than a sum of its parts." An increased capacity for effective involvement in participatory processes is the result.
- The TCI axioms set an ethical basis as a compass for human actions in general and in particular for the actions within the group work.
- TCI is a comprehensive methodical system that permits the use of many procedures, exercises, techniques, etc. within its framework.
- TCI promotes the understanding of working together in groups. Being attentive to group process, as well as being able to influence this process constructively, are fundamental concepts.
- TCI has been successfully applied over a period of 30 years in Europe and the USA in all forms of learning in groups: schools, universities, adult education, training in business companies, conferences, self-help groups, town meetings, etc. The system is applicable from the smallest group (i.e., counselling) to the largest (i.e. university lecturing).

This compilation of TCI articles and materials has been possible only with the aid and encouragement of many persons and organisations. My gratitude goes especially to Dr. Ruth C. Cohn. Her vision that this book HAD to be published gave me the confidence to proceed with a task which was at first foreign to me - that of translating and editing. It has been an invaluable learning experience. The generosity of the authors and publishing houses in permitting articles to appear in this collection provided the basis for a significant reference work in TCI (see "Acknowledgements" and "Authors"). Dr. C. Thomas Abraham gave a valuable critique from the Indian perspective. Brigitte Schoenbeck has helped with the book's organisation and with the editing of texts. Richard Arnold provided invaluable aid with mastering the manuscript in the computer. The Karl Kuebel Foundation for Child and Family (Bensheim/Germany) with training institutes in Coimbatore and Bhopal were instrumental in inviting myself and other TCI group leaders to be involved in training programmes, thus opening the door to the application of TCI in India. WILL-International has provided moral support through their interests in promoting TCI internationally.

A hearty thanks goes to these persons and organisations and to all who have supported this undertaking during the past few years!

Mary Anne Kuebel Tromm/Germany,
October 2001



Dr. Ruth C. Cohn

b. August 27, 1912 in Berlin, Germany.

This picture was taken when she visited a TCI Workshop in February 2000

Part I

INTRODUCTORY TEXTS

Chapter 1

THEME-CENTERED INTERACTION
AN INTRODUCTION

Paul Dean

This paper is a personal interpretation of the basic principles and practice of the theme-centered interactional group method. Part One of the paper is concerned with an overview of the method and the practical philosophy of its basic principles. This section describes the basic postulates and axioms of Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI), together with a series of auxiliary rules. Part Two is a presentation of the elements of good group leadership and examines the tasks of the TCI leader, together with some indications of technique.

The TCI Method

Theme-Centered Interaction is a highly flexible method designed to enhance learning possibilities in the widest possible way - whether curriculum teaching or a philosophy of life is involved. WILL stands for LIVING learning as opposed to dead learning - the "taught" lesson. When TCI is used less material may be covered but it will be assimilated in a deeper, more personally meaningful way. TCI steers a balance between the guiding authority of an authentic leader and the self-direction of the group, maintaining

boundaries, theme setting and dealing with disturbances to the theme, to name but a few of his/her tasks.

TCI has a philosophy of life as its basis. There is a concept of free will and personal choices to be made and taken responsibility for, whatever the external limiting factors. There is a feeling that the organism, if provided with the right conditions, will tend towards life enhancement and growth both for itself and others. In order to *learn* in a living way, various other factors need to be taken into account: the background of life events, the needs and demands of the "learning" setting and personal needs. In short, to learn we need also to be able to work, play and love. The background factors are accounted for in TCI by the concept of the globe.

The Globe

This is the *context* of the group, the "where, when, why and what" which it is. And this globe is itself in a country, a world, and a universe and some attention, however slight, has to be paid to these factors and the possible and probable ways these impinge on our activities and influence our relationships and the tasks we set ourselves.

"Human experiences, behaviour and communication are ordered by interactional and cosmic laws. They are not isolated events but inter-related with all past, present and future persons, events and particles in time and space. As Humans we are both conditioned and free to choose; we are bound by natural laws and bonded by Existential Postulates. Our effectuality and our maturity grow with growing consciousness." Here, Ruth Cohn is approaching the paradox of freedom versus determinism and affirming her view that Human Beings are both conditioned *and* free. That within the larger globe of interacting cosmic laws each Human Being, conditioned as he/she is by so many factors, has freedom.

TCI is primarily a supportive approach, it seeks to recognise and address the other as a unique individual, with valuable qualities.

It is also implicit in TCI that individuals are responsible for themselves and their own feelings. There is no such thing as a "victim" in TCI, except in the case of the use of physical violence where superior strength may be used aggressively. "I feel 'this,' in relation to You," is very different from "You make me feel." When I think *you* are responsible for the way I feel I am turning myself into a "victim," or else avoiding the responsibility for my own feelings. I think this is beginning now to touch on the notions implicit in the concept of "Chairpersonship."

Chairpersonship

A good chairperson has a well thought out agenda and respect for his/her own perceptions and of others. Being my own chairperson means being aware of my inner processes and outer experiences, listening to the messages of my body, flow of emotions, intiutions, judgments, hopes, fears, dreams and fantasies, and accepting myself as I am - including the wish to change.

I am conditioned by drives and reflexes, drives to survive, of hunger, sex, relationship. The drive to create and make-sense-of. There is an urge to become uniquely different yet experience my union and wholeness with all matter. I am bonded with the earth, and life, as an interdependent co-creator and partner in however small a way, with the universe. Growth means increasing awareness of realistic factors and perceptions concerning this partnership. To be my own Chairperson means to recognise my limits as a here-and-now embodied person who has limited powers. I am neither omnipotent nor impotent. To be my own chairperson means to balance my wants against the "givens" of situations, in order to find some measure of fulfillment in my interactions. In a group I need to respect others and their own chairpersonship and our task together. Except through violence no-one "chairs" another.

"Even inside the womb, the child has his/her own growing power and fortitude. When the infant is born, the mother can offer food but the child chooses to swallow or reject . . . Not to be aware of

my own power and responsibility is to set others up as illusory caretakers or to develop an independent autistic world of fantasy. When I am my own chairman I am neither blindly doing my own thing nor submissively following an irrational should."

Disturbances take precedence

This is the most important extension of the chairpersonship postulate. All of us attend first to which ever of us is disturbed, or to that which You, We or I am disturbed-in-relation to. Whatever distracts or disrupts us in our task together, must be attended to and dealt with, to a sufficient degree that enables us to feel able to continue with our work together, or perhaps to choose another task if this becomes necessary. Analytically speaking:

"Resistance, expressing fixated anxiety must be diminished before work on content can be meaningful."

It is this process of explicitly dealing with the disturbances, distractions and blocks to learning and growth which contributes to the unique value of the TCI approach.

Auxiliary Rules

The following auxiliary rules are a set of guidelines for the group leader (and sometimes also for participants, where the members of the group are experienced in the TCI approach). These rules are a way of making it more possible for 'Living Learning' to take place and enhance the value of the postulates of 'Chairpersonship,' 'Dealing with Disturbances' and the reality of the 'Globe' which we all share.

The Here and Now

TCI is an existential "here and now" approach, working in the present but . . .

"Here and Now" is often misunderstood to exclude the past or the future. Here and now in the exclusive sense can be as much an escape from real experience as fantasy or hallucination or the "here

and now" experience of the addict. Here and now is myself as I am being and as I am being done to - right now. It is how I am perceiving, feeling and thinking right now, about the past, present or future, about You-I-We or It. "There and Then" conditions my here and now experience to perhaps as great a degree as any other factor.

"Differences" are what make us unique and so we need to be appreciative of our differences before we can see our sameness. Once we recognise and accept our differences *and* our sameness in our dialogues together, "WE" emerges - a *we*, that is this group yet *more* than this group. So after I comes WE, this is one of the cornerstones of TCI. The GROUP, be it small or large, formal or informal, has its own identity and qualities and must be taken into account. Our "We-ness" may be at times something "I" can value and at others something I will devalue but nevertheless it exists and, if I so choose I can work towards the creating and valuing of 'WE.' Outside the structure of a small group, this is no mean task but in a way it is to this wider context that TCI is also addressed.

When we are together there is also inevitably an "IT." In his book "I and Thou," Martin Buber calls the realm of it "usage." "It" is the *use* that you and I are making of each other, the coinage of our meeting-and-being-with. Or, put another way, "It" is what we make use of in order to *be* together. But our "currency" is often de-valued which results in dead-learning and un-living tasks. TCI in its encounter and accepting of I and Thou and Us together helps bring the dead to life and even the IT tasks are embodied by our living participation. "It," then, for TCI, is the realm of the theme; the theme is always active and presented formally as an I or a We, DOING something together, a happening in which I am engaged with You.

Truthfulness: is it possible or even necessary? What is necessary is authenticity and congruence, two terms from existential psychotherapy. When I am authentic I am being true to myself and my globe. I tell you what I choose to, and withhold what I need to; I make deliberate choices to do this. I act in accord with

my feeling, my body expresses who I am congruently with my emotions. In fully being myself, much is evident of who I am, in my posture and expression. I make no attempt to change this but to learn what my body needs, what it can tell me and what it may tell you. Two further concepts of TCI are therefore, "Being selectively authentic," and "Being aware of my body."

Being selectively authentic

I do not have to tell ALL the truth, only that which I freely decide for myself to share. But what I DO choose to share must be authentic.

Making I - Statements

This is part of my chairpersonship, it helps you know better what is going on in me, it helps you know better how to relate with me and makes it clear that I take responsibility for my own experience. If I say, "one," "we," "they," "all," "no-one" or "everybody," then I am employing "others" to back up my opinion - and not taking full responsibility for what I state.

Be aware of what you really want to say or do: not what you ought to or what you feel like saying or doing.

In TCI *want* expresses a voluntary decision and choice between my inner striving in the here and now reality. What I *ought* to do is 'superego' a blind parental 'should' or a desire for conformity with you or my internalised *imposed* value system. What I *feel* like doing is often an ill considered wish that needs evaluating before rushing into action.

Postpone generalisations

These are also likely to stop the group process. But *can* help the group to move on from one sub-theme to another.

Be aware of the messages from your body

I am often so out of touch with myself that I disregard my body messages until sometimes, for example, I have to 'ache-my-head'

to make myself notice how I am feeling about something!

"Look for what's missing"

This is another TCI aphorism. I would also add to that "Look for the Opposite."

One at a time please

If more than one person wants to speak at a time then converse with each other on what you want to speak about. This means that everyone who wishes to speak gets a brief chance to air their concern before full group interaction resumes. This technique helps eliminate the dominant versus submissive or shy member clash which often otherwise occurs in multiple interactions. Full concentration on each person and what is being said needs one-at-a-time statements. When I want something NOW I often miss what else is happening or else obscure it or spoil it, so I wait until I am ready and WE will receive me. If I cannot wait I interrupt, take a risk, become "passionately involved" and suddenly THIS becomes the "IT" for us, one of us has become excited, or DISTURBED . . . Hence"disturbances take precedence."

Side conversations take precedence

These also usually contain very important things for the whole group. "Would you be willing to share what you wanted to say with all of us?" When someone talks to a neighbour rather than the group they are often highly involved in what they say, or they may feel too shy to say something to the whole group that they feel important - perhaps something hostile about what is going on, or he/she may be taking a private tangent, feeling "out" of the group.

Postpone questions - questions are for information only.

If you ask such questions, make statements about what the question means to you. *Make the statement behind the question.* Often in less experienced groups when I request the statement behind the question I get told "Well I was just curious," to which I

may reply "Well, you have become curious for a reason and perhaps if you allow yourself to think for a moment or two you might discover what makes you curious about this or what it is that this means to you."

Ruth Cohn says, "Only questions which ask for information are authentic . . . All other questions are statements in disguise." When asked inauthentic questions which Ruth Cohn says are usually statements in disguise, the questioned person often reacts defensively and gets into a "scapegoat question-and-answer game," or gives a false response in a "one-up" counter question. If I make a statement about my experience I inspire the flow of interaction and you are more likely to respond.

Postpone interpretation of others as long as possible; give your personal reactions instead

Interpretations if timely, cement what needs to be said but if untimely or incorrect arouse defensiveness. Authentic personal reactions induce spontaneous interaction. And finally, remember!

"Rules were made to be broken"

The auxiliary rules are only a guide or map for the possible structure of a workshop and should not be slavishly followed. Otherwise they will have the effet of deadening and limiting rather than that of freeing which is their aim and greatest value.

"Only the fusing power of knowledge and intuition bring sense into sensual; only the binding power of faith brings meaning into sensual and intellectual data . . .

Is knowledge really as safe as scientists think or faith as insecure as the 'knowers' assert? (Einstein knew that scientific facts are relative to the observer and that science remains senseless without faith in sense - in meaning."

I have used this quote from Ruth Cohn here because I think it points clearly to the value of intuition, and spontaneity to bring

meaning and life to the realm of the intellect, to perception and the 'objective' knowledge of the sciences. Subjectivity is after all *my* objectivity. Trust is needed in the flow of intuition and feeling balanced by intellect and experience. TCI is a holistic method.

The TCI Leader

The TCI Leader Is A Participant Leader. I am my own personal chairperson but also chairperson of the group. The leader is "the guardian of the method." When leading a TCI group I attempt to "model" the ground-rules by being my own chairperson, attending to my own disturbances about myself in relation to myself or to You or the Group and sharing as much or as little as I choose. In order to "Give and get what I want from the group" I participate as fully as I choose and to the degree that does not prevent me from attending to the tasks of leadership.

Awareness and exploration of the globe

As we have seen the Globe is a vitally determining factor and needs to be explored and understood as fully as possible by the leader. I need to have an idea about the way in which the purpose of the group is perceived by its members and the relationship or likely prior interactions of participants.

Planning and theming

After I have explored the Globe and have some understanding of it and if possible also have some ideas about the individual globes of participants I can begin to use this information in the development of a theme or a number of themes. Sometimes in a longer workshop or a series there will be an overall "Umbrella Theme," or as I sometimes think of it, a "Parachute" theme!

The various interests and needs of the participants and their "investment," is called in TCI terminology the "I stake," and has to be kept in mind closely with the overall Task of the group.

TCI-lers say: *"The Theme Has Power."* Once set the theme

exerts a powerful unconscious influence on the group and it is important that the theme is set well. The precise wording is of consequence.

The theme is best set in a positive, active mode; this speaks directly to the unconscious mind and actively engages right and left brain hemispheres.

Themes arise from the exploration of my globe and ours in relation to the contextual globe and task of the group. There are three types of themes:

"I Themes" - where the aim is to explore the "I Stake" and develop Chairpersonship and autonomy, and in early groups to build the "WE" of interdependency and group cohesiveness.

"We Themes" - promoting cohesion interaction and interdependence and also a sense of universality.

"It Themes" - the actual development and use of themes and specific "content" such as a subject or syllabus material.

To help us focus on a theme TCI has developed the use of "Steps".

"The Steps"

These are guiding instructions or suggestions that may steer the group towards a general or a particular approach to the theme. The steps may begin with some relaxation techniques before beginning to "Clear a Space," to make a safe space where one can be in charge of oneself and give full attention to the theme, the distant past, the more recent past, and the "Here and Now." There are however many other ways of using the steps procedure - perhaps to include sub-themes or concentrate on specifics such as body sensations or visual imagery. The steps may involve movement, music, guided fantasy, or some other evocative material pertinent to the theme. Thus the steps may help to guide us into inner space, exploring silently whatever the theme evokes in us, be that on-theme, or disturbance.

Disturbances at this point need to be "held on to" if possible until the steps have been fully stated and the group has had time to consider them. With more regressed patients or younger people there are sometimes interruptions, questions and eager demands to "get on with it," and if possible these need to be gently contained or dealt with by whatever resource I can muster.

Either with or without an explicit theme there are always one or more sub-themes present, perhaps a long disturbance becomes a sub-theme.

Promotion of Dynamic Balance

Balance is like riding a bicycle, lean too far one way and then "I" fall off. I must balance and pedal equally with both feet in order to move forward. So, too much "I," too much "We" or too much "It" is unbalanced. Too much of "I" means no room for "We," too much of "We" and "I" gets stifled, and if "It" overwhelms then "I" and "We" are static.

The TCI symbol is of a triangle within a circle. The circle represents the globe and the points of the triangle represent the I and We and the It. Each angle of the triangle must remain equally "weighted" for the balance or form of the triangle to remain the same. In practice, the shape of the triangle is constantly shifting and changing as one point becomes enlarged or weighted and then another and another - occasionally it has seemed to me that the triangle has turned into a rhombus or some even more complex and perplexing form!

Some other factors to be balanced are - thinking and feeling, the intrapsychic and interpersonal, here and now, there and then, the formation of the We-identity, roles, coping styles, control, power and influence and individual needs versus group needs.

Dealing With Disturbances

Even when I set no theme, there is, depending on the globe, an implicit theme, like: "Being in the hospital to learn to function better," or "Being and doing together to help me grow and change." These

depend on my and our needs and aims and when and how and in what circumstances we meet.

In psychotherapy groups, the disturbances often set the themes, e.g., the crises of love, sex, birth, death and disaster. However, in non-therapy groups these kinds of themes are very much temporary sub-themes to be resolved at some level as soon as possible to enable a return to the main theme, which may be anything appropriate to the immediate globe, for example, "Understanding D.H. Lawrence's poem 'The Ship Of Death'."

Whatever the globe, group members are encouraged to share when they are distressed, distracted or too preoccupied to attend to the theme or take part in the group discussion. Ruth Cohn in a personal statement about the classroom globe once said, "If you spend fifty minutes on a disturbance you can teach in ten what you could not teach in sixty."

In dealing with disturbances, there are many ways to respond in a group. Sometimes telling about it is enough. The person or persons may want to shout or cry, touch or be touched, sometimes to draw or to paint, or to role-play - I might suggest one of these to help with the disturbance. I will also help in locating any possible connection between the disturbance and We here, or It and Us. Perhaps through my perception, or a "Group Snap Shot" (which is a word or short sentence from each of us), or perhaps through an image or a gesture, the inner balance required to continue with the task can be restored.

Responses and Judgments

When I make a judgment about how to act in a group there are many factors that affect this process, for example my cultural background, past life experience, myself - my unique personality and character structure, my politics, my implicit and explicit values and life philosophy, my present life circumstances, my here and now experience in this setting, this group, my professional background,

training and experience, the theory and techniques of therapy that I consciously espouse, any unconscious conflicts and inflamed complexes I have and the degree of my ability to deal with these, and intuition. These factors all together affect and contribute the whole sense of myself embodies over against the coming-toward-me of you or the group, and the calling-for-a-response-from-me.

There are various responses I may make: silence; interpretation; exploration of the situation - for you and/or for me; encounter - I feel this in response to you now; I can make an absurd suggestion, or reversal; I can make a paradoxical statement or recommendation; I may make a didactic statement as a learning aid; ask questions - who, why, what, where; I may ask for associations; check out the reality - how do others see this; suggest a role play; voice dialogue; psychodrama or a game; use message; I may use percept language; perhaps I could tell a story or a tale, a reminiscence, song or action, gesture or mime; I could suggest visual art work; pair up and dialogue; sub-groups; exit and deal with this later; refer someone to a therapist; engage the group - "how do we deal with this?"; I could suggest a group sculpt or tableau; adopt a problem solving approach; connote things positively; offer an item of information; or suggest a guided fantasy, the list is as long as the possible responses at one's disposal and in relation to the other factors as listed above. At any one time the possibilities seem more or less, not enough or too many and too much. I need to trust myself to "know" what to do and act authentically in my and the group's best interests and I believe that at its most effective this "knowing" comes from my deepest self.

Promotion of Living Learning

In living learning what I learn has *meaning* in the total context of my life and in my immediate "here and now" experience. When I am totally and actively involved in the teaching/learning process living learning is taking place.

As a leader I endeavour to help others to deal with distur-

bances and balance individual and group factors - both expressed and unexpressed. (Looking for what is missing, the "opposites" or energy, or "taking another route.")

Living learning means that each member relates to the theme in a personal way and not just as information to be assimilated or an experience to be endured. While respecting their chairpersonship, I also encourage people to take risks if they are ready, in the safe space of the group taking a chance may mean the discovery of a new way of dealing with a situation or the understanding or partial resolution of some limiting behaviour or concept.

I attempt also to help people balance "What I want" with "What I can have," and the tension between the group needs and those of Individuals.

Living learning can take place outside the confines of the group and TCI aims to give the "tools" for a life of living-learning and the postulates of TCI can become part of a philosophy of life.

Processing

Where appropriate the leader helps the group to "process" the session, looking back over the process of the group to see what happened, when and how. Also, to see what was learned and what is different now since the beginning of the group.

To end, I will quote Ruth Cohn again, describing here her own discoveries of the changes her new attitudes brought about in her work. I understand her use of the word "experientialism" here to represent the mode of interaction embodied in TCI:

"Since I have practiced experientialism I have felt freed from the illusionary role of the neutral, remote, and relatively invulnerable role of the analyst, and of concepts like "object relationships," "love objects" (meaning people), and the "nothing but" reductionism of a label-happy objectifying, antiquated form of reference, I stopped sitting silently behind the couch, talked more freely about my own experiences, and lifted the taboo of touch. I did not, however, throw

out all I had gained from training and experience in psychoanalysis. I valued experientialism as a continuation of Freud's bringing the past into the present - particularly with his concepts of transference, resistance and the defense mechanisms. Now as an experientialist - I could share my personal feelings as well as my knowledge with my patients. I worked on finding a criteria for valid intuition and selective authenticity and on learning to choose what part of my experiencing was most useful to share. Experientialism allowed me to use myself, the person I really was, in my own and the patient's interest, which included my therapeutic knowledge and skills. Being a woman, a therapist, an immigrant, a mother, in love or not, married or not - whatever I was at any given moment - I tried to accept and communicate as openly as it seemed comfortable for me and useful to the patient. It was (and still is) a new world. Many more patients than before have grown able to function well in life, and in much shorter time, and with much less pain."

"We live together in one reality, however our experiences and perspectives differ. I must acknowledge the heterogeneity of my fellow men and not want to press them into my norms. However, I have to represent my own values. We can help ourselves mutually in expanding our perspectives, although never with the goal of forcing them into congruity; for the position of one observer is never the same as that of another, even when the actual incidents are the same. Likewise, our ability to perceive as well as our previous experiences differ from person to person. Thus we can understand why clear communication and respectful listening are so important."
(Dr. Ruth C. Cohn)

Chapter 2

TCI IN A NUTSHELL

Mary Anne Kuebel (Compiler)

The following are central concepts in the model of Theme-Centered Interaction. These are brief definitions. For a more thorough comprehension it is necessary to read the other articles in this book and - most important! - acquire experience in group work with TCI leaders.

The TCI triangle within the Globe

The "I", "We", "It" and "Globe" are the four systemic elements always present in groups:

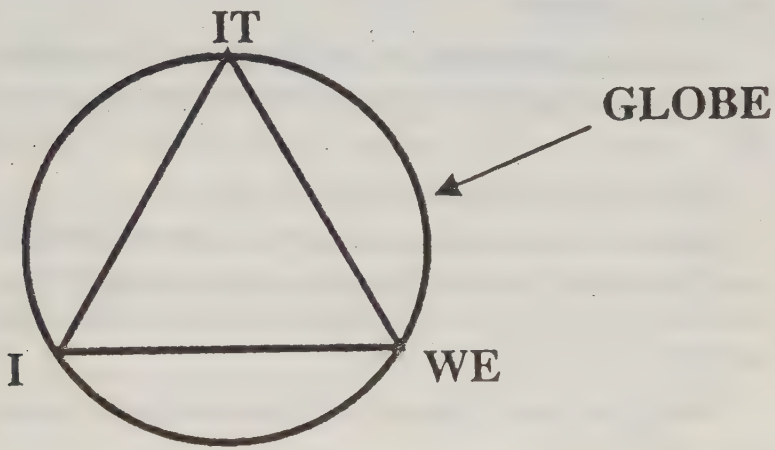
The emblem of the TCI triangle within the sphere shows the four essential factors present in every group process. All four are connected with one another and are equal in worth. These factors are:

- the individual whose attention is directed towards herself/himself, towards the others in the group and to the theme (= I);

- the participants in the group, who become a group through their attention to the theme and the interaction in the group (= WE);

- the task, the theme, with which the group is concerned (= IT);

- the environment which influences the group and is influenced through the group, i.e., the environment in its immediate and farther consequences (= GLOBE). (Ruth C. Cohn)



The TCI axioms

Three axioms (established fundamental assumptions which do not have to be proved) are basic for Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI) and function as its value system:

1. *The human being is a psycho-biological unity and a part of the universe.* For that reason he is autonomous and interdependent at the same time. An individual's autonomy becomes greater, the more our consciousness of everyone's interdependence with everything is expanded (anthropological axiom).

2. *Reverence is due to everything living and to its growth.* Respect for growth necessitates value judgments in decisions. The humane is valuable, the inhumane is threatening to values (ethical axiom).

3. *Free will occurs within conditional internal and outer boundaries; expansion of these boundaries is possible* (pragmatic-political axiom). Our exercise of free will is larger if we are healthy, intelligent, materially secure and spiritually mature, as opposed to our being sick, lacking in good sense or poor or if we are suffering under violence and immaturity.

The TCI postulates

Two postulates (dictates) are derived from the TCI axioms. They provide a basis for deciding on how we wish to behave and act:

First postulate: *Be your own chairperson.*

That means: Be aware of yourself and your internal realities and your environment. Take each situation as an opportunity for your decisions. Give and take according to how you wish to be responsible for yourself and others.[1]

Second postulate: *Disturbances and strong involvements have precedence.*

Be aware of obstacles along your way, your own and those of others. If they are not dealt with, growth will be more difficult, if not impossible.

Auxiliary rules:

In groups it is usually helpful to have some basic rules to guide procedures. With TCI these "auxiliary rules" are aids in communication and techniques of intervention which promote a more personal contact with the meanings of the axioms and postulates. They are to be used as "helping" rules - that is, only to the extent that

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1 In India the chairperson postulate often provokes a considerable discussion. It is equated with egoism and therefore met with resistance. Tying it in with the axioms here is helpful. The articles by H. Modesto and D. Stollberg aid in clarification.

they really "help." The decision to use them (or to make them visible) in the group process varies according to the situation. The following are rules which have maintained consistent value in TCI groups:

- Speak per "I" and not per "we" or "one."
- Decide for yourself - what you must, may, can, should, or want to say or do (as well as the negatives of these).
- Be selective and authentic in your communication.
- Only one person speaks at a time. Those wishing to speak at the same time agree among themselves as to whom begins.
- Be cautious with generalisations. They have the tendency to interrupt the group process.
- If you ask a question, say why you ask it and what that question means to you. Speak for yourself and avoid interviewing.
- Hold back with your interpretations of others as long as possible. It is preferable to state your own personal reactions.
- Be aware of your body's signals and be aware of those of others.
- If you make comments about the conduct or the character of another participant or of a person not present, state additionally what it means to you, that he or she is the way he or she is (that is,. as you see it).

The TCI theme ("It")

The main theme for the entire course is set through the course description. In the beginning phase of the course, it is often useful to examine the main theme with the participants in regard to their own expectations, thus settling on a contract between the group leaders and participants which is binding for all concerned. In this way, the stated task (the "It") for the group work during this time is defined and the principle of transparency in the group work will be established.

The sub-themes for each of the group sessions (usually 1-1/2 hours in length) will be decided by the group leader(s) and will be stated at the beginning of that session. Important aspects are:

Determining - Developing a feeling for and determining themes which are appropriate for the participants and the situation according to the process within the group work itself. The TCI group leader strives to discover the key issue within the general theme which is to receive attention next. He does this in such a way that every participant is optimally involved in "living learning."

Formulating - The precise verbal form of each determined theme, which contains as many aspects of reality in a given situation as possible. Formulations should be engaging, specific and easily understandable, take the general interests of the participants into consideration, make constructive thinking possible and support the personal commitment of the individual.

Introducing - Guiding a group through the acquaintance with a new content, a specific presentation of a new task and/or question which is the next to be attended to.

The TCI Group Leader:

According to the concepts of TCI, leading includes leading oneself as well as leading a group. Leading is chairpersonship put into practice (cf. Postulates). TCI group leaders are model participants who involve themselves in the group process by being selective-authentic. In addition, the group leaders assume the responsibility, as far as appropriate and necessary, that the group remains in contact with the task which they have defined and the goals which they have set (the leader as "caretaker" or "advocate" of the theme). They give attention to the balancing between individual and common needs as well as those involving the environment. They give consideration to the auxiliary rules and generally assume the tasks of establishing, formulating and introducing themes.

Dynamic balance:

The TCI system works on the equilibrium hypothesis. It states that the individual (the "I"), the interaction in the group (the "We"), the theme as the group's task (the "It") and the environment in the narrowest and widest sense (the "Globe") are essentially equal in value. It is possible for the group to be learning together in a lively fashion, as long as the dynamic balance among these four factors is established again and again. However, there is never a statistical equilibrium in group work; balance is possible only as a *dynamic* process.

Selective Authenticity:

- Understanding how "openness" can be practiced positively in group work.

"Everything, which is said, should be genuine; not everything, which is genuine, should be said. Tact and timing are integral parts of each intervention, and thus an anticipation of possible reactions from others." (Ruth C. Cohn)

Interdependence:

- Experiencing ourselves as neither completely independent nor completely autonomous, rather mutually dependent (cf. 1st axiom).

Silence/Periods of Quiet:

Calling for times of quiet reflection is common in TCI groups, especially after the introduction of a theme. This facilitates the individual participant in assessing his or her inner and outer realities before continuing the interaction with others.

Structuring:

All the elements pertaining to time, space and group constituency (plenum, smaller groups, etc.) belong to the structuring of the group process. The group leader decides or guides the decision-making in regard to these elements. The most important

criterion is the extent to which a particular structure (for instance, sharing with a partner for 5 minutes within the group room) is contributing to resolving the task set by the theme.

Rounds

Structures within which the interaction is stopped and the participants are given the opportunity to react briefly to a question. The expression "round" is an indication that the group is often sitting in a circle and that each person will have a turn. The simple round follows one after the other around the circle (sometimes passing an object, such as a stone). Other rules are possible, such as used in the exercises "Flashbulb" and "Weaving a Net."

"Rounds are an aid in guaranteeing that each individual in the group has a chance to express himself or herself." (Ruth C. Cohn)

Integrating other methodologies, exercises, techniques. etc.

TCI is an inclusive system. Insofar that they do not contradict the basic axioms, methodologies, exercises, games, techniques, etc., can be used if they are functional within the set theme and if they are applied in adaption to the group situation. Using them as a "goal in themselves" is usually contraproductive.

Biography of Ruth C. Cohn and the history of TCI

Understanding TCI means also understanding the life and mission of its founder, Dr. Ruth C. Cohn. Being familiar with her biography provides a better grip of the basic concepts (cf. her article "Peepholes").

Chapter 3

GROUP LEADING AS ATTITUDE AND SKILL:

THEME-CENTRED INTERACTION (TCI)

Dr. C. Thomas Abraham
Mary Anne Kuebel

This article was published as a booklet by the Dept. of Adult Education, Mahatma Gandhi University/Kottayam early in 2000. It had served as the lead paper in the TCI seminar organised by the University from 5th to 7th December 1999. At the closing of that seminar WILL-India was founded, a historical moment in the development of TCI in India. Minor changes have been made in the original text.

In 1992 the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India, set up a National Advisory Committee to advise the Government on improving the quality of learning while reducing the burden on school students. Prof. Yash Pal, former Chairman of University Grants Commission, headed the committee. In 1993 the Committee (commonly known as Yash Pal Committee) submitted its report. The opening sentences of the report are: "Our committee was concerned with one major flaw of our system of education. The flaw can be identified briefly by saying that ' a lot

is taught, but little is learnt or understood.' This widening gap between what is 'taught' (subject) and what is 'experienced' or learnt is a universal problem in all teaching -learning situations. The recently introduced District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in selected districts in India is an attempt to solve this problem. DPEP tries to make education child-centred (instead of examination-centred), experiential (instead of theoretical), and activity-oriented (instead of examination-oriented). The activity orientedness facilitates the involvement of the whole person (not merely his cerebrum), as well as the whole group (not nearly the individual) in the learning process.

The Yash Pal Committee Report and the DPEP documents, which are recent phenomena in the Indian educational circles, are relevant to the central thrust of what is proposed to be discussed here, namely Theme-Centred Interaction (TCI). TCI is a model of working together in groups in educational, business and therapeutic settings. Developed by Dr. Ruth C. Cohn, TCI had its origin in the knowledge and practice of psychoanalysis, group-therapy and group dynamics. Before introducing TCI we would like to reproduce here a passage from an unpublished article entitled 'Toward More Humane Schools', written by Dr. Ruth C. Cohn.

> *I believe that most people want children to grow up to use their abilities for their own and other people's joy and usefulness and become productive social participants in their communities (which may be wished for on the smaller scale of family, village, or nation, or on the larger, human society)*
>
> *For goals to be reached, methods must match. The competitive principle, however, is adverse to education which is aimed towards personal and cooperative maturity; so is the so-called traditional "medical model" in which the patient is acted*

upon by someone who has knowledge of his illness. If the ill person is totally unconscious, this model is adequate. The doctor is subject, the patient is object. However, in most illnesses the patient is conscious and able to cooperate in research and cure of the sickness. (A doctor who does not use the patient as his own researcher and therapist misses out as a healer.) A similar model has been used in education. The subjects - parents, teachers, and community - determine what is taught to their objects - children and students. Parents and school system unite in feeding and programming children. They determine what students and children must learn, "what is good for them" without realising that learning depends on the process of discovery rather than on pre-processed input. This "things" the students and stunts their growth, joy and liveliness.

Since Ruth C. Cohn is relatively a new author to Indian readers and trainers, we consider it proper to introduce her before proceeding further with this article. Ruth was born in a German Jewish family in 1912. Because of the rise of National Socialism she had to migrate to Switzerland in the 1930s where she studied psychology and was trained as a psychoanalyst. In 1941 she migrated to the U.S. There she initiated a 'workshop on counter-transference' which formed the basis for development of experimental therapy and Theme-Centred Interaction. She became an active member of American Academy of Psychotherapy, a meeting place of practitioners of the classical as well as newer psychotherapeutic methods. In 1996 Workshop Institute for Living-Learning (WILL) was founded at New York, an institute of training, research and practice of TCI. In 1974 she returned to Switzerland where WILL-Europe was started, which later got developed into WILL-International. New York Society for Clini-

cal Psychology presented Ruth C. Cohn with "Psychologist of the Year Award" (1971). She has been awarded honorary doctorates by University of Hamburg (Germany) and University of Bern (Switzerland).

According to Ruth "A group is a group when the members participate spontaneously in awareness of a common focus, the theme – be it a task, a perception, a theory. The relationship between each participant, the group and the theme can be visualised as a triangle in concentric transparent globes". The working hypothesis is that the following four basic factors are equally important, namely

- the individual person: "I"
- the group as a collective entity: "We"
- the focussed-upon theme: "It"
- the environment, nearby and far away, in which all experience takes place: "GLOBE".

(The graphical representation is on the first page of "TCI in a Nutshell".)

The process of skillfully balancing these four equally important factors results in functional group-interaction and living learning, as opposed to broken, dysfunctional group-interaction and dead learning. The group leader has the special responsibility for facilitating the balancing between the basic factors in the group process.

The Hallmark of TCI

TCI is a training system, which aims at promotion of what is now internationally called 'living learning'. In living learning what I learn has meaning in the total context of my life and in my immediate here and now experience. When I am totally and actively involved in the teaching/learning process, learning does not become a burden, instead living learning takes place. In living learning I need to relate to the theme in a personal way and not just as infor-

mation to be assimilated or as experience to be endured.

Carl Rogers who, along with Fritz Perls, Virginia Satir and others, was a colleague of Ruth C Cohn in the AAP (American Academy of Psychotherapy) has identified the five elements, which are involved in living learning.

> "It has a quality of *personal involvement*, the whole person in both his feeling and cognitive aspects being in the learning event. *It is self-initiated.* Even when the impetus or stimulus comes from outside, the sense of discovery, of reaching out, of grasping and comprehending, comes from within. It is *pervasive.* It makes a difference in the behaviour, the attitude, and perhaps even the personality of the learner. It is *evaluated by the learner.* He knows whether it is meeting his need, whether it leads toward what he wants to know, whether it illuminates the dark area of ignorance he is experiencing. The focus of evaluation, we might say, resides definitely in the leaner. *Its essence is meaning.* When such learning takes place, the element of meaning to the learner is built into the whole experience."

TCI is a highly flexible system designed to be able to enhance learning possibilities in the widest possible way, whether it is in the context of curriculum teaching or a philosophy of life. When TCI is used, less matter may be covered, but it will be assimilated in a deeper, more personally meaningful way.

TCI steers a balance between the guiding authority of an authentic leader and the self-direction of the group. The leader is important: he decides the direction of the flow in the group, theme setting, maintaining boundaries, and leading with disturbance to the theme. In all this the collective wisdom of the group is trusted. The leader is only a participant leader.

TCI's major axioms

Underlying the group process that Ruth Cohn called Theme Centred Interaction, it is possible to identify a few principles or axioms. This is what makes TCI a system rather than a mere training methodology. It is possible to say that TCI is embedded in certain ethical values. The following are the major axioms:

a) Every organism, if provided with the right environment, will tend towards life enhancement and growth for itself and others. The phenomenon of recuperation is the best evidence for this. A wound heals by itself if external interference (germs etc.) is kept away; no medicine is required. That is why it is said, doctor only dresses the wound, God heals it. If the learning environment which includes the learner's own background, the group and the globe are conducive, he/she will learn in a living and transformative way.

b) Human beings are both conditioned and free. This is essentially the paradox of freedom versus determinism. TCI acknowledges the fact that human experiences, behaviour and communication are ordered by interactional and universal laws. They are isolated events but inter-related with all past, present and future events, persons and particles in time and space.

c) TCI seeks to recognise and address the other as a unique individual with valuable qualities. In a traditional teaching/training situation the importance attached to the subject/theme leads to almost the total neglect of the learners (I's) and their environment (globe). Furthermore, the individual is to be regarded in his interdependence with all aspects of the universe. TCI upholds the view that individuals are responsible for themselves, for their thought and concerns, and for their feelings. In the TCI process the individual decides which of these thoughts, concerns and feelings he or she wishes to express to others. This is the concept of selective authenticity. As Ruth Cohn states, "Every thing which you say should be genuine; not every thing which is genuine should be said.

Tact and timing are integral parts of each intervention and thus an anticipation of possible reactions from others." In this sense each person practices "I am my own chairperson". Assuming the responsibility for one's own thoughts, concerns and especially for one's feelings, it is nearly impossible to become a *victim* in the TCI process. No one can *make* me feel angry/sad/depressed, etc. *I* am reacting to *my* interpretation of the behaviour of the other person, upon which *I have decided* to feel as I do. When I think *you* are responsible for my own feelings I am turning myself in to a victim or else avoiding the responsibility for my own feelings. In this sense I am my own chairperson. Chairpersonship is an important principle in TCI.

TCI: the I-We-It-Globe Constellation

TCI is based on the working hypothesis that a group is an interactional group when each person, the group as a whole and their topic of study or task are seen as of equal importance. The task (or subject of focus of attention), as mentioned above, is called the theme or 'It'. The 'It' is that small segment of reality, which happens to be the immediate focus of attention of the participants. Each person, in his/her attentiveness to the theme and the other participants, is the 'I'. All participants in relation to each 'I' and 'It' are 'We'. The 'Globe' surrounds the group in its environment in concentric circles of closeness and distance in time, space and impact.

TCI's 'Equal Importance Hypothesis' of I-We-It-Globe is the implicit foundation of any humanistic theory and practice. I am as important as you and we; we are interdependent with world as a whole, and with the 'It' which requests our attention, support and interaction. Going one step further (which Ruth Cohn does not do explicitly), we may say that this whole constellation is as God willed it; I and you are put together, embedded in the Globe which he has provided, to participate in, and continue, the divine task of creation. This in Indian philosophy is the promotion of the 'Sthithi'

stage in the srushti-sthithi-samhara. The other two stages (srushti and samhara) are exclusively God's domain.

The whole world is however never within reach of our senses and mind. WE can only grasp splinters in succession. The tiny parts, as focus of our mutual attention, are our immediate 'It'. In therapy groups this 'It' may be one person's problems which are of general concern; or it may be a theme such as "Establishing Effective Channels of Communication". In a classroom it may be "I and Electricity".

The Theme in TCI

There is no such thing as a group without a theme. In the TCI system "theme' means a concern which has been formulated. It is a concentrated, in most cases verbally expressed, focus of attention of the group. It is most advantageous when the theme corresponds to the concerns of the participants. This concern is usually formulated by the leader or by a small team commissioned for this task. In some cases, themes may have to be set in advance, for example, from a curriculum, or from the concerns of a hierarchical organisation. Such themes may not always be related to the actual concerns of the participants. Even then if the theme is well-formulated, it has the capacity to evoke group interest.

TCI-ers say 'The Theme has power'. Theme has a summoning quality. Themes are co-leaders. Once set, the theme exerts a powerful influence on the group and it is important the theme is set well. The precise wording is of consequence. The theme is best set in a positive, active mode. There has to be enough room for every participant to project his/her own perspective on to the theme to realise living learning. Since all persons are different, having different needs and concerns and connecting different memories with each of them, they should not be forced (as is usually done almost every where else) to make use of the same access to the theme.

Ruth Cohn has reported how she realised the importance of formulating the theme.

It was during one of my early TCI workshops. The theme was "The Writers Block", in the sense of factors inhibiting free flow in writing. For several hours the 'blocked authors' rotated back and forth with descriptions of the difficulties they encountered trying to write. It was a verbal orgy about being blocked. Then it occurred to me to re-word the theme into "Freeing Creativity in Writing". In no time the common lament about blocked thinking gave way to reflections on those occasions when they had overcome their blockages.

An adequately formulated theme

- is stated briefly and clearly, thus easy to keep in mind;
- is not hackneyed and therefore is also not boring;
- is tailored in its assumption of language-skills and knowledge-base of the participants;
- is conveyed in a way that excludes no one and hurts no one's feelings;
- is not conceived so narrowly (concretely) as not to leave room for freely occurring ideas, thoughts and pictures;
- is not conceived so broadly (abstractly) that everything fits in and nothing comes to focus;
- has the characteristic of inviting emotional involvement;
- is not an infringement upon human rights and the value axioms of TCI;
- encourages the process in the group, as long as it fits both logically and psychologically into the sequence of themes being handled and supports a dynamic balance between the differing concerns of the

participants and the realities of the subject under con*sideration.*

Well-formulated themes make use of the suggestive effect of words. "How can we achieve better team-work in our Department?" This suggestive invitation protects from tedious sharings of terrible conditions and bitter experiences. This theme is likely to yield better results than something like "Poor Communication Among our Staff". The theme "Being Myself - Even at Work" suggests the possibility of promoting self-actualisation at work much better than a discussion on the "De-personalised World of Work". Encouraging activity through the use of verb-form as well as using the I-form are good home-remedies while formulating the theme.

Dynamic Balancing

In TCI each angle of the triangle must, ideally, remain equally weighted for the form or shape of triangle to remain the same. In practice the shape of the triangle is constantly shifting and changing as one point becomes enlarged or weighted and then another and another, in almost quick succession. In other words, the balancing envisaged in TCI is a *dynamic* balancing, not a static one.

The dynamic balancing is attempted and experienced in different areas of interaction in the TCI process. Some areas of the dynamic balancing in the group process are indicated below:

a. Between the *I, We* and *It* factors. In order to maintain this balance, the individual participants will have to adjust to the group needs as well as the theme needs. I have to balance between *what I want* and *what I can have.*

b. Between *I-We-It* on one side and the *Globe* on the other. Here the interaction has to be balanced in its consideration for the *Globe*, thereby making the interaction realistic and relevant to the environment.

c. Between the *guiding authority of the leader* and the *self-direction of the group*. As a result of this balancing process, the

leader does not become a *director*, nor does he become a *mere participant.*

d. Also, within each individual participant, a balancing has to take place between the *feeling self* and the *thinking self*, so that the *whole* person participates in the process.

One of the central tasks of a leader in a TCI situation is to be the *guardian* of the many areas and levels of dynamic balancing in the group process. This in practice could be something as illustrated below.

A lecture on a given theme (emphasis on IT) can be steered to the consideration of the individuals' access to this theme (emphasis on I) with an invitation such as "Let us take two minutes in silence, in which each of us recalls the specific personal experience he/she had in regard to this topic." After the silence individuals are encouraged to share their experiences. In the following discussion, the interaction among participants (emphasis on WE) can be supported with questions such as "How do you feel about John's remarks?" or " Have the rest of you had similar or different experiences?"

TCI Postulates

Awareness of inner and outer processes that basically determine the thoughts, feelings and actions of individuals and groups is an essential aspect of the TCI process. Ruth Cohn has identified two postulates related to this awareness. They are:

1) *Chairpersonship.* This means being aware of oneself and one's internal realities and one's outer environment. Take each situation as an opportunity for decision-making. Give and take according to how you wish to be responsible for yourself and others.

> Ruth Cohn says of chairpersonship:
>
> *Being my own chairperson* in an interactional group means to perceive and respect others, their personal, psychological and physical givens, their own

> chairpersonship and our mutual task. It means to take myself, you, and *our* pursuits seriously. *To be my own chairperson* means to recognise myself as a unique psycho-biological autonomous being, defined within the limits of my body-mind, time-space existence including my need for survival and self-actualisation in the living learning process. It also means to acknowledge my bonding with humankind and matter as an interdependent part and partner of the universe. Therefore personal growth means to become increasingly aware of realistic givens concerning this partnership.

Exercising the chairpersonship principle should not be confused with egoism or crass individualism. On the path to becoming maturer in being my own chairperson, I will become more aware of the needs of other individuals and groups, and also more grounded in social and global concerns.

2) *Disturbances and strong involvements have precedence.* Be aware of obstacles and disturbances along the way, one's own and those of others and those in the setting/environment. The TCI triangle can be used as a compass in analysing the source of a disturbance. If they are not dealt with, growth will be more difficult, if not impossible.

Ruth Cohn says:

> *Agony, distraction or exhilaration stands in the way of accomplishing interactional tasks. Strong antagonism or preoccupation may occur in any group member's consciousness and sap away concentration on the group's purpose.*

One way of viewing this postulate is that it provides a tool for dealing with much phenomena in group work which often retards or prevents active learning, such as boredom, physical discomfort, irritation about others, concern about a situation at home, etc. A typical TCI intervention might be to invite each participant to

share: "What do I need to say or do at this moment in order to be entirely present here with *you* working on *our* task?" Often, just inviting the participants to consider these issues for themselves is enough to re-establish a lively working atmosphere. Sometimes expressing them briefly in the group is appropriate. Lengthier discussions are necessary only if the "disturbance" is relevant to the set theme. The "We" of the group arises from centring on a theme and at the same time maintains an awareness of the impact of the GLOBE (setting/immediate-remote environment).

Auxiliary Rules

Over the decades of practising TCI in groups, certain informal "rules" have proved useful. However, they must be judged according to their adequacy for the group concerned. Auxiliary rules have to protect or complement the philosophy of TCI's axioms and postulates. Otherwise they could be serving a contrary spirit. Intolerance and dogmatism are possible names for this contrary spirit. Some of these rules are given below:

- Speak for yourself, using I-statements rather than using We-statements. By using I-statements, the person speaking bears responsibility for what he or she is saying.

- Side conversations need to be attended to. They usually contain very important things for the whole group. "Would you try to share what you wanted to say, with all of us?"

- Be cautious with generalisations. They have the tendency to interrupt the group process. They help only when they can be made with absolute certainty.

- If you ask a question, say why you are asking it and what that question means to you. Leaders should dissuade questions which are posed as an avoidance game, in which the individual is avoiding expression of his or her own experiences or thoughts, and is hiding behind the question.

• Hold back your interpretations of others as long as possible. State preferably your own personal reactions, using I-statements, which are more effective than You-statements.

• Be aware of signals arising out of your body's sphere and be aware of those of others.

.• If you make comments about the conduct or character of another participant or a person not present, state additionally what it means to you, as *you* see it.

• These rules are not to be administered in a Ten-Commandments style. They are to be judiciously used (if they appear helpful) by the leader at particular points in the group process.

Implementing TCI group work

Significant among the skills of a TCI group leader is his or her attitude and manner of approach in dealing with the varying and developing situations in the group. He sets appropriate structures (time budgeting, choice of themes and sub-themes, working in plenum or dividing up in to smaller groups), as well as selectively introduces exercises and techniques that aid in determining, deepening and realising the purposes of the task at hand.

It is important to keep in mind that exercises and techniques are not a part of the TCI method itself, although there are many which have become a part of the repertoire of most TCI group leaders. They belong rather to a much larger category. These exercises and techniques can be used within the frame work of most group methods, such as consultations, Gestalt, sensitivity training, traditional school classes, group dynamics, transactional analysis, all forms of adult education, etc. They can also be used effectively in TCI groups - that is, with some special considerations.

Therefore a group leader should become skilled in judging whether, when and how a particular exercise or technique will benefit the process of the group members in working on their set tasks.

Exercises and techniques are tools and have no value per se. The value is intrinsically intertwined with the group leaders' ability to use them effectively. Exercises and techniques, such a "Fishbowl", "Flash Bulb", "Guided Fantasies", "Role Playing", as well as various games may deepen the common experiential basis among the participants, but should never be used as goals in themselves. The focus in TCI group work remains the lively exchange of thoughts and feelings of the participants as they proceed with achieving the task which they are concerned with and which is the adhesive factor in their being together and working together.

Closing remarks

In this brief overview of Theme-Centred Interaction, we have attempted to state the central concerns of its founder, Ruth Cohn, along with a description of the main elements of the TCI system. TCI basically is a system involving attitudes and values which are universally acceptable, as outlined above. In spite of this universality the group leader has the function of orienting the group with these attitudes and values and assisting the participants in realising them in the group work. The assumption is that group leader(s) and participants are bound together in a learning process, and that this learning process involves personal growth.

The quality which makes TCI a tremendous asset for the leader using it, is that it can be applied in almost any setting, excepting for those which involve persons who cannot assume adequate responsibility for themselves, such as individuals with emotional or behavioural disturbances, small children, etc. Although it is preferable to conduct the group sessions with every one sitting in a circle so that the individual "I's" can see each other and interact directly, it is possible to use TCI principles in a class room where the tables are screwed to the floor or in an auditorium with hundreds of participants. Each situation is unique and challenges the creativity and flexibility of the group leader.

Chapter 4

TCI's AFFINITY WITH INDIAN TRADITION

Father Kuriakose Mampilly

This statement was presented by Father Mampilly in a TCI training seminar at the Karl Kuebel Institute for Development Education, Coimbatore/Tamilnadu in February 1999.

We Indians greet each other saying "Namaste." The root meaning of Namaste is "Not me, but you" or "I pay my respects to you." We say this meaningfully only when we are aware of the "Spark of the Divine" dwelling in the cave of our hearts.

According to the "Dvaita" system of Madhava, the "paramatman" and "jeevatman" are two different realities. But, the "Advaita" system of Sankara teaches non-duality. "Aham Brahmasmi" and "Tatvamsi" – "I am Brahman" and "That thou art" – are the classical articulations of advaita philosophy. When we realise that there is a spark of the divine dwelling within every human being, we will respect ourselves and each other. Hence, the "I" and "we" dimensions of TCI are taken good care of in the Indian tradition.

In the universe, we see the plant and animal kingdoms and Mother Earth. All these form nature – "prakruthi" -, which is an extension of the image of the Creator, the "purusha." The rishis

used to see the divine reflected in each piece of creation. "Is'á Vásy ám idem Sárvám" – "God resides in everything" was their belief. So, they paid homage to plants, trees, animals & even to the tiny grains of sand. To them, the whole universe was one big family – "Vásu Daiva Kudumbakam." Thus, the "globe" in TCI also could be understood as the "givenness in and around us, which though restricted, is also God – created and willed."

The Indian tradition exhorts people to perform their duties without desiring the fruits of their labour. This is called "Anásakti" or "Nish Káma Kárma" yoga. The establishment of "Dharma" (holding together) is God's work. He makes use of human beings in this endeavour. Hence, all that we do in our lifetime is only a tiny fraction of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work. The "It" of TCI, then, according to the Indian tradition, would be, the task I am assigned to in my life.

My life becomes fruitful to the measure in which I perform the task of my life, in union with God, keeping the dynamic balance with myself, others and the whole universe, without desiring its fruits.

Part II

HISTORY AND EVELOPMENT OF TCI

Chapter 5

PEEPHOLES:

ABOUT THE LIFE HISTORY OF TCI AND RUTH C. COHN

Dr. Ruth C. Cohn

The choice of this theme is based on the assumption that readers of this issue of "Gruppendynamik" on Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI) may be interested in the origins of TCI and its initiator. Such an article can of course only provide some glimpses of the developmental processes and of some systemic theoretical and pragmatic points of TCI.

I was born 1912 in Berlin, a Jewish-German child in a bourgeois home who early in life became aware of social injustices all around despite her own safe environment.

In 1933 shortly after the onset of Nazi terrorism, being a student of psychology and literature in Berlin, I fled to Zurich and completed my psychoanalytic training. In 1941 I emigrated with husband and one child to the USA leaving the insecurity of the nearby war as stateless refugees.

The USA granted me the chance for growth from a narrow psychoanalytic approach toward progressive and experiential

therapy and education. In this atmosphere, I modified the use of skills and knowledge of depth therapy and group dynamics for living and working groups.

The symbol of TCI is the equilateral triangle in the multi-layered globe and points to the theory and practice that any interactional group has four factors which shall be regarded as of equal importance: The individual person (I), the interactional group (we), the pertinent theme or task (it), and the many faceted globe (the near and far environment).

If I take myself seriously and grant the same dignity to all people and all other "living-things" and the earth, the TCI-symbol can become a guiding instrument for myself as an individual and a member of the world.

"No, I didn't do it! I didn't touch the gooseberry cake. Yes, I like to eat that kind of cake, but I didn't do it." Mama and the maid do not believe me. There is a piece missing, and I had been alone in the kitchen. But I just didn't do it! I know who it was - Gerhard! And they believe him because he is older and does not lie, they say.

I am not punished. I do not want to cry, but I do. Because Mama says: "Lying is the worst thing you can do!"

Gerhard is allowed to do everything, because he is older and he is a boy. He is even allowed to play alone on the street. Girls are not allowed to do that. However, three years from now I will become a boy. (Just as I was formerly a boy.) Then he will be a girl. I am convinced of this, because God is just, and I know that I was once a boy. And older. It's going to be my turn again.

I lie in bed crying with the pillow over my head. I realise now that God is not just. I have just turned six years of age and Gerhard has already been going to school for three years. Mama says, "God knows everything. And He has reasons for everything, even if we do not understand them." My parents always have reasons,

too. There is no such thing as a child's having a reason. They say that I will understand everything when I am grown up, like them. I am not as big as they are, but still they do not understand everything. They can only understand what I am saying out loud. Is concealing also lying? God knows if I am concealing something. I believe that He forgives me. If I tell Him everything, then He will love me.

But Papa loves me, even if I am a girl and younger. His face beams if I do something well, such as balancing on a bar or learning the names of the streets or parts from operas by heart. Mama loves me also very much, especially when I am being put to bed, although we have to hurry up; also when I sit quietly under the piano while she is playing and do not disturb her, or when she is phoning or writing letters at her desk. As long as I am not disturbing. And sometimes she picks me up from school - I run to her and she snatches me up.

I like to go to school. I never had children to play with besides my brother, who never wanted to play with me anyway. But now I am the favourite child. He is always being scolded and Papa even hits him sometimes. Then I feel sorry for him. At the same time, I want to be better than he. I practice the piano and play very well already. Grandma even wept when I played for her. She said it was only because she felt so happy! That's probably because she is old. I cry only if something hurts or if I am sad.

Now I am a heroine. I was very brave while the doctor cut something out of my throat, without even having told me ahead of time. My parents had said that the doctor was only going to have a look. That was not true. And they knew it. Those were growths which he cut out. I sat on the lap of a nurse, who held me quite firmly. I didn't have a chance to scream before he stuffed something into my mouth. My parents sat in the waiting-room. And when the nurse brought me out and said: "She is a heroine," they were very proud. They said to me, "You are a ray of sunshine."

And later outside on the street they gave me their hands, one on the right and one on the left, and I was overjoyed hopping along between them; because they had called me "a ray of sunshine" and had given me a picture book, which was called "Little Sunshine," with a text which I could already read quite well.

I am seven years old. I can read and write already. I put a piece of paper under my pillow with the words, "I promise that I will never allow a child of mine to suffer so much." My girl friend and another girl had hidden my cap in order to tease me. When I got home, I demanded of Mama that she help. Why doesn't she help me? A mother ought to!

The pains of childhood hurt, whether they are legitimate or not. And I believe that both are O.K. Or almost always.

A good friend of mine, Vin Rosenthal, once said to me, "Didn't you know that almost everyone perceives and judges their parents in the same way that they perceived and judged them at the age of seven?"

And as he said that in order to comfort me because of my feeling guilty, I saw my Uncle Ernest before me. He was the husband of one of Mama's sisters, a criminal judge by profession, in a district court. I saw him and his family at that time only once a year. I knew him almost only from the common noonday meal which we all had together. He always spoke of things that concerned him during mealtimes. And those were the cases of defendants in which it was doubtful whether they had committed the crime - "one shouldn't be punished unless the crime is verified." That meant verifiable according to the principles of law and justice. So I loved him very much. Absolutely and from afar. He was closer to God, the righteous God, than any person I had ever known before.

One day I was really grown up. Everything was completely different. My father had died. At the age of 17, I suddenly be-

came the mature daughter of a woman deserted by her beloved husband through his death. I felt responsible for her. And I really did manage to help her to get hold of herself again - by becoming active in Jewish organisations, which were becoming isolated from all others.

Around this time I got to know a psychoanalyst who told me about her profession. I had never heard of this profession before. I knew immediately that this would become my profession. "I want to understand people better. And myself as well." I had already worked before in a poor section of Berlin as a volunteer in social work. "There shouldn't be any poor people. And no extremely rich ones, either. And there should also be no signs on apartment house entryways such as on ours, 'Stairway only for ladies and gentlemen'." Alongside this sign there was an even smaller one: "For servants and deliveries." That included the tenants of the cheaper apartments in the building to the rear. For the maids and children without elevator keys, there was a spiral staircase. I loved it. We "ladies and gentlemen" had eight rooms. Our two maids had to share a tiny room with a chest of drawers and a closet and a hidden toilet. This antisocial parcelling of living space could have been broken only through a revolution. My parents were not revolutionaries.

A break in writing in order to reflect: I picture the readers and think about how I might present my personal life history up until the beginnings of TCI. What will I decide to choose out of all the possibilities?

I have an idea - my journey with the Jungfrau train. Along the way through the long railway tunnel in the Eiger glacier up to the mountain pass, there were windows for viewing the scenery, peekholes. So that somehow my resumé will convey not only outlook, but also insight, I could write it in the form of "peepholes."

Lying sick in bed, not knowing that he would be unconscious in a few hours and dead a few days later, my father said on New

Year's Eve 1929/30: "Difficult times are coming. I should close my business. But the 60 employees would find no work..." And only a few years later there was rumbling in the streets and professional signs, such as the one of our notary directly across from us "A. Levy, Notary," were ripped from the walls. And the first banners appeared, too, stretched over the streets: "No one should be hungry, and no one cold, but the Jews should perish." Every adult person whom I know, Jewish and "Aryan" alike, are convinced, that "this phantom will disappear within the next six months."

I had experienced anti-semitism neither in school nor on the street before 1932. My father had always warned us, "You didn't have to go through it - in my school I was still treated very badly because of being a Jew, by the teachers and by my fellow pupils. Remember this: If Mr. Miller is guilty of something then it is Mr. Miller who did it; if Mr. Levin commits an injustice, then it is 'the Jews.' Both of you must never commit an injustice. "

Arriving at the university I experience the power of anti-semitism. I am afraid. I have read Hitler's book. And I want to continue studying psychoanalysis and related academic subjects. Rather psychology than medicine. I am interested in the mysteries of the soul and the question of how it develops from birth up to our becoming mature. So I want to become a psychoanalyst. I knew that it was no longer possible for me to do that in Germany.

1933 - in the early morning hours after Hitler's take-over. I attempt to persuade my mother and my brother to emigrate. They don't listen to me and I decide to travel alone to Zurich in order to study there.

At the University of Zurich I very quickly discovered a partner. He was one of six other Jewish fugitives. (We were officially students, not fugitives. There were no fugitives at that time! We signed a declaration somewhat later, after we had been expatriated from Germany because of being Jewish, that we would nei-

ther seek residency or citizenship in Switzerland upon finishing our studies.) So I studied every subject which was in any way connected with psychoanalysis, each for two years,: philosophy, literature, theology, etc. Also pre-clinical medicine. Most important was my training at the International Association for Psychoanalysis, which at that time had only a few members. My first analyst, Hans Behn-Eschenburg, died of a heart attack shortly after the beginning of my analysis. My analyst afterwards was one of his pupils, who had just completed his studies, Medard Boss. To begin with, he was classical-orthodox - ten years later, an existential analyst.

I did not attempt to defend myself against the invisibility of the person sitting behind me during that time - from 1933 to 1938, six times a week! The analyst's feet were just as firmly anchored on the floor as my obedient body lay on the sofa. Behind my closed eyes, however, images were vividly in motion - performances of swastikas spearing and shooting about themselves. If I spoke of torture and murder, my analyst re-directed my attention to my present life in Zurich. "But, Dr. Boss, there just has to be something which will take us away from this murdering, this torturing and these wars. People have to learn to understand themselves and others, just as I am now trying to do, and as you have done, too. But you are seeing only eight patients a year, eight hours a day, six times the week, for a period of three years! That is hardly enough for all those persons who need it!"

Heavily booted Nazi feet pursued me during the night until I woke up - I lay as if paralysed on my bed and tried to save myself from those boots on the stairs, even after I had noticed that I was dreaming. Only after searching laboriously, could I find a muscle in the back of my neck and, massaging it gently, I could manage to wake up - in Zurich.

Now, while I am writing this, there is a tune playing on the radio, a song which I had first heard during that time in Zurich. "Our life is

like someone wandering through the night, each holding his own sorrow within him tight." I translated this unconsciously many years ago as "... each holding his own very special delight."

There was no discrimination from 1933-1940 against non-medical psychoanalysis students in Zurich. When I arrived in 1941 in New York, I discovered that the sole psychoanalytical institute there accepted only medically trained persons. I got to know a group of young analysts who had been trained by Theodor Reik, one of the prominent early pupils of Sigmund Freud. Together with Reik these psychology students founded The National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis, called NPAP, which discriminated against no one (not even medical doctors!). As a member, and later also as the chairperson of training, I explored the difficulties which beginners (and others, too!) have with situations in which counter-transference occurs.

Transference is that which we transfer from our earlier experiences, especially from our early childhood, to later experiences. Counter-transference was the term for that which psychoanalysts and other therapists transfer onto their patients. Basically it is the same phenomenon, only the designation is different. However, a second factor is important here, too - patients (and pupils) are often very suggestive, so that the analyst who is responsible for training must be especially alert, so that they do not become overwhelmed by their transferences (called counter-transference), in addition to their own in regard to the patient. (The same is also true for teachers and other professionals, who are especially strong transference figures for those who are learning from them.)

Counter-transferences were still considered "disreputable" for analysts in the thirties and forties. One was simply not regarded as mature enough for the analytical profession, and the only way to fight back was to return once again to one's own training analysis. The more experienced analysts lived according to the pattern of "The Emperor's New Clothes" - they hardly dared to admit that

they personally were experiencing trouble with their counter-transferences. Therefore, I was unsuccessful within my own organisation, the NPAP, in getting a seminar about counter-transference included in their program. A young colleague (Mildred Newman-Berkowicz), who shared my opinion, offered to organize a counter-transference workshop for me privately.

I would like to add: transferences are a part of normal everyday living. They are a part of one's personal development in a given social and cultural community. We can neither get along without a language (which we have learned from others), nor without practised gestures, feelings, ways of thinking, without having to assume something from others during the earlier phases of our development and transferring it into our own lives. Transferences are only dangerous at that point when our ability to perceive here-and-now reality with our here-and-now senses and thoughts and emotional capacity and to exercise critical consciousness has been damaged (or when we neither can nor want to adjust them).

The Counter-Transference Workshop

During the evening before the first workshop I became restless. I had not actually considered how I would be teaching "Dealing with counter-transference." I thought that the candidates might be anxious about speaking of their own difficulties with patients. So, I thought that I could perhaps bolster their courage if I recounted a case of my own. I had to convince myself about this, since I was certain of the disapproval of my colleagues, the training analysts of these students. That made it a difficult matter to speak of counter-transference during a regular supervision session. How difficult would it then be to make a fool of one's self in front of the students. However, I could think of no other way.

That I summoned up the courage to relate my difficulties with a patient of my own in free association was a serious decision. However, it was unquestionably the most productive one in my professional life. I said to my colleagues that I would present to

them a case in free association, just as I otherwise did for myself alone. And I asked them not to interrupt me before I signalled them to do so. While I was speaking, I became aware of some things which were impeding me in the therapy with this patient. However, I was more troubled by the thought that my young colleagues here present surely knew all along what was not proceeding well between me and the patient. My counter-transference was - and that is what I learned during this session - that this well-known professor of chemistry was so clever that she knew everything, a feeling which I had as a small child for my father. I had transferred this feeling onto the group, just as I had done before with my patient.

When I stopped speaking, an enthusiastic, lively interaction emerged among the participants. Some empathised more with the patient, some with me, some with their own situations as therapists or as patients. We could then further clarify the psychotherapeutic situation between the patient and myself.

In the counter-transference workshop we developed a many-layered methodology. During each meeting colleagues related without preparation cases in free association. We waited for the moment at which the person who was relating a case maintained that they could think of nothing further to say. In the course of time we learned to maintain our silence a while longer, because almost always, just at the point when the person mistakenly believed that everything had been said, that very thought would occur which became the key to understanding the counter-transference.

Many years later I experienced that same phenomenon of sudden insight with Fritz Perls, at the end of an intense searching between two or more possibilities of deciding, which he called an "impass" (Engpass). He recognised the impass as the passage into an "organismic change." If everything pertinent has been considered and expressed consciously, a void emerges, through which something new can flow, and change can take place. A group

supports this process by its dedicated presence.

I experienced myself for the first time in these counter-transference workshops not only as a therapist and as a teacher of the group, but as a partner in living. This did not infringe on my function as the group leader, neither in individual nor group therapy nor in the slowly developing methodology of Theme-Centered Interaction. The model of the counter-transference workshop spread quickly within both psychoanalytical institutes in which I taught. Those were the NPAP and the Postgraduate Centre for Psychotherapy (later: "Centre for Mental Health").

In 1961 a leaflet from the American Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP) arrived at my home. It advertised: "The Continued Growth of the Psychotherapist." I was excited and happy. At that time, apart from the counter-transference workshops, no one I knew spoke about the growth of the therapist. The focus was primarily on the patient.

In the American Academy of Psychotherapists, psycho-therapists from many parts of the country who wanted to broaden their horizons, were getting together. Among others, they were Carl Rogers, Virginia Satir, Jules Barron, Vin Rosenthal, Carl Whitaker and John Warkentin, Albert Ellis, Henry and Vivian Guze, Elizabeth Mintz, Stanley Lipkin, Alexander Lowen. We shared and discussed with our colleagues those things which we were working on individually. So it happened that the counter-transference workshop became more well-known through their Academy.

How can the therapeutic successes of the counter-transference workshops be explained?

- A primary consideration was the desire to help each other and to help our patients. Because of our being equals within the group and because of the similarity of our needs, there was neither a criticising-around nor a know-it-all attitude. We were all in the same boat. Each participant's sense of self-esteem and strength

of identity were supported, as well as his or her ability to be a cooperative and sympathetic member in the group.

• We took ourselves, the colleagues, and the patients seriously. Nobody was an "object of treatment" - neither the therapists who were present, nor the patients who were not. While we discussed the conflicts which the therapists were having with their patients, we treated, each of us, "the patient in ourselves." Thus, all of them together, patients and therapists, served us in a healing deliverance from our own fixated disturbances.

• Although feelings and thoughts were given equal consideration, from time to time we allowed our consternation to take precedence over working things through cognitively. By subsequently evaluating the cases cognitvely, we then expanded our own horizons. (Feelings and intellect are more lively and creative if they are permitted to support each other, instead of mutually excluding each other. The balance between intellectual and emotional experiencing is a factor in maintaining health.)

• As the leader of the group, I expressed my feelings and my viewpoints. Of course, I set the structures. At the same time, however, I was, as everyone else in the group, searching for my blind spots. I neither felt that I was an expert, nor alleged to be one, because the fact was that these young colleagues were more knowledgeable about some things than I was! Because of this attitude, our existential partnership became a matter of fact, and problems of authority and dependency could thus be dealt with supported by a greater trust.

The Birth of TCI

I had a premonition that the "counter-transference-workshop-method" could be modified into an educational-political one. But I had not as yet formulated a theoretical basis to start from. Many colleagues approached me during our meetings. "Come to my organisation sometime. Do something for us as a team or for our

superiors." Among those approaching me were a large psychiatric hospital, a large industrial corporation and several counselling agencies. Each time I said that I did not know what I should be accomplishing, but I went, and was very surprised that the results were essentially positive almost everywhere.

The type of services which I provided to these organisations would be classified today as "organisational or team supervision." Through friends, as well as my own participation in a two-week seminar in group dynamics in Bethlehem/USA, I knew that this was already being done in the area of group dynamics, which had been initiated by Kurt Lewin. My observations concerning the kind of group-leading (in which the leaders were relatively silent) in this two-week seminar, as well as their objectives, were antithetical to those I intended for my social-educational and therapeutic ideas.

However, in order to understand somewhat better the "magic" in my work which made it so successful with non-therapists, I withdrew for one summer into the Catskill mountains. The question was, "What am I actually doing?" My efforts to solve this question brought little success at first.

Back in New York, I observed more closely how I proceeded in my group work: I set a theme or deduce it from the group process. I consider what each person says, at the same time attempting to be sensitive as to how each person is feeling. I deal with the theme personally, and sometimes I tell the others what I am thinking about it and what I know about the theme. I wait in order to assess whether and how much interest the participants are showing for it. I am as supportive of remarks expressing opinions and feelings as I am in therapy groups, except that in these thematic groups I deal with personal problems only as long as necessary for the individuals and for the interaction to be able to participate in the theme. If disturbances and strong involvements hinder somebody to participate in the group and/or to engage in the theme,

this is given precedence. I am a member of the group, just as the others, with the additional functions of observing the process and the interaction in the group, including consternations and disturbances, and of intervening according to my judgement or my intuition.

During my deliberations about what it might be that was making these non-therapeutic groups so successful, it occurred to me that I take each individual person, including myself, very seriously. I take into consideration how he or she is looking, what his or her feelings could be and what is going on inside of myself. I collect thoughts - primarily the positive aspects of thoughts or behaviour - and focus on supporting the participants in becoming aware of constructive aspects as the processing of the theme becomes clearer.

It is possible to treat even quite negative and aggressive aspects constructively when people become aware that respect for them as participants is guaranteed,

Therefore, I consider the individual "I's," likewise I consider the total constellation of the group, the "We," how the individuals are relating to each other, as well as the "It," how they are regarding the subject which is being processed.

I also consider myself to be the "caretaker" of the subject matter - of the task, the theme, the "It." These three elements, I, WE, and IT, which are indispensible in calling a group interactional, are always embedded in the larger context, the GLOBE. With this designation I intended from the very beginning to include not only the neighbouring context in room and time, but the entire area of exterior influences. These are already integrated within each person, albeit always in different ways. The globe is not only the obvious, visible context which can be surveyed relatively quickly, along with its influences. It includes the persons with whom we live and those upon whom we are dependent and their direct and indirect influence. Also included, moreover, are less readily ac-

cessible elements: persons who have already died, long since forgotten cultures, historic events and the stars - for everything is connected with everyone and everything.

I, We, It and Globe are the systemic elements in TCI groups, all of which demand continuous attention.

After many months of an apparently futile search, I dreamt of an equilateral pyramid. After awaking, I interpreted the dream as follows: An equilateral pyramid has four basic angles. My group work is based on four elements. They are interrelated, and my hypothesis is that they should be treated equally. This was the basis for the theory I was looking for. In order to be able to visualise them clearly, I then changed the four balanced points into an equilateral triangle within a many-layered sphere.

The fundamentals for group leadership according to the method of TCI was defined with this hypothesis of a balance between the elements I, WE, IT, and GLOBE. I deduced their philosophical basis at a later time. This method differed from those of other training, therapy, or encounter groups through the equal emphasis of the elements IT and GLOBE, I and WE. In schools, universities and other educational institutions, the IT is emphasised at the expense of the I and WE. Previously the GLOBE, similarly to the THEME, had found no genuine place in encounter and therapy groups. (The concept of balance could be particularly useful in religious communities. However, there is usually a lack of the necessary consciousness in church institutions.)

The recognition and advancement of the principle of balancing the elements of "I-We-It-within the Globe" is the basis of the TCI group method. The issue is not a static, but rather a lively- dynamic balance. Maintaining the consciousness of a dynamic balance of these elements in the group process is one of the essential explicit factors of TCI. Being conscious of the dynamic balance in group leading is just as easy to express theoretically, as it is difficult to practice. This is also true in our private everyday lives,

because the task is avoiding being overcome either by an individual egocentricity or a collectivism which endangers the personality. That neither means "I am only here for others" nor "I am only here for myself." The same is true for the readiness to be aware and to act accordingly of larger communities, such as towns and nations.

System-inherent axioms:
Prerequisites upon which TCI is based

The humane-holistic axioms form the irreducible prerequisites of TCI as an applicable system and method, without which TCI could not be so "effective" as a match ignited in a hay barn.

If these principles are not recognised, TCI methodology can be misused as a self-negating technology.

1. *The human being is a psycho-biological unity and a part of the universe.* For that reason he or she is autonomous and interdependent at the same time. An individual's autonomy becomes greater, the more our consciousness of everyone's interdependence with everything can be extended.

Comment: To the extent that I am aware of the actual situation, including the abilities and dependencies of those working and/or living together in a group, I have more possibilities to re-present myself and my values realistically, in contrast to my handling the situative field and the characters and relationships among persons mindlessly. I become more autonomous to the degree that I allow the world into myself consciously.

The concern in this *anthropological axiom* is a personal and social identity and competence which is not exhausted within the realm of the personal and social, but transcends both spiritually and existentially.

2. *Reverence is due to everything living and to its growth.* Respect for growth necessitates value judgements in making deci-

sions. The humane is valuable, the inhumane is threatening to values.

Comment: To be humane means, for example, not tormenting living creatures and never to kill more of them than is necessary for the sustenance and furthering of life; whereby the idea of killing includes also the deadening of emotional and mental abilities; also killing through ecological and economic violence.

We are dealing here with *an ethical axiom,* whereby this axiom can be understood purely ethically or also religiously. Since human beings can know nothing about the ways of an absolute being, the value compass is to be understood only as applying to the area of human inevitabilities.

3. *Free will occurs within conditional internal and outer boundaries; expansion of these boundaries is possible.*

Comment: Our exercise of free will is larger if we are healthy, intelligent, materially secure and spiritually mature, as opposed to our being sick, lacking in good sense or poor or if we are suffering under violence and immaturity.

This *pragmatic-political axiom* indicates the interlocking of inner and outer worlds. In this sense the three axioms are inseparably related with one another.

The axioms of TCI are age-old, but have never, as far as I know, been systematically summarised in this way. They should be guiding principles today, since through the popularisations of "God is dead" and "Everything is relative" not only religion but also ethics could be and were pushed thoroughly aside. An existential and ethical compass for human dignity and the dignity of life is essential, if we are placing any value on earthly life at all.

I also deduced two postulates. They indicate the realisation of humaneness through the process of becoming more conscious, through mind-expansion and through the ability to act upon decisions.

Postulates help in the realisation of the axioms through mind-expansion and the ability to decide and to act.

First postulate: *Be your own chairperson.*

That means:

a) Be aware of yourself and of your internal realities and your environment.

b) Take each situation as an opportunity to make your own decision. Give and take according to how you wish to be responsible for yourself and others.

As my own chairperson, I chair my "internal group" - my different needs and endeavours. I make myself conscious of my feelings and weigh my "I shoulds" against my "I would likes." Also, I want to be conscious of my decisions and my abilities and limitations. I am a participatory member in the human race and in nature and jointly responsible for their existence and their perishing.

To be my own chairperson means, therefore, to comprehend and to stay on course within my possibilities and limitations as a human being: I am not almighty, I am not powerless, I am partially powerful. I am always only my own chairperson and never that of another person, except when that person loses or has not yet attained his or her own consciousness.

A rootlet of the chairperson-postulate, "grown in the USA": I lay in bed with the flu. A neighbour dropped by - she was apparently going shopping. She did not ask me whether she could bring along something I might need. I was angry that she did not suggest that to me. Later, at a time when we knew each other better, I told her about my anger. She replied, astonished, "Why didn't you tell me? I just dropped by, thinking you would tell me if you wanted anything. And if you didn't want anything, it would have been impolite of me to ask you." - In America I heard, "Take care of yourself." "Never be demanding" was my German message. -

The chairperson-postulate combines the two: "Look inwardly, look outwardly - decide responsibly according to how you see reality."

Second postulate: *Disturbances and strong involvements have precedence.* Unspoken and suppressed, they determine processes in school classes, executive committees, governments etc. Psychic aberrations, as long as they are not indicators of deeper disturbances, are usually resolvable for the moment through their verbal expression and a brief exchange of views, through a catharsis or through the promise of a discussion of the matter at another time. Disturbances due to structure and disturbances in time planning, clattering windows, errors in the agenda - all these things happen. Also malfunctioning in the flow of information, inadequate work distribution, etc. In the hierarchy of disturbances - personal and material - it is almost always advisable to give personal disturbances preference. Naturally, there are exceptions. For example: "Never start analysing in a burning house!" And: "Don't set a house on fire in order to use outer circumstances as an excuse to disregard personal distraughtness." That leads to the most difficult and most frequent disturbance in our inner-personal as well interpersonal lives, because manipulating by means of false statements rarely turns out well. "Not everything has to be said, but what is said, should be genuine." This is the concept of "selective authenticity," which I set up during the height of the encounter movement, a juxtaposition to their belief that "absolute frankness" is mandatory.

In the journal "Theme-Centered Interaction," Günter Hoppe formulated in 1993 a third postulate: "Get involved." Although I am in total agreement that not only becoming conscious, but also acting accordingly, belong to the essential tasks in the maturing of a person, I also advocate that the decision as to what I should do and whether I should do it, must depend on available abilities and the specific situation. This is inherent in emphasising both - au-

tonomy and interdependence. The sense of a postulate lies in its relatively general validity. A concrete imperative, such as, "Get involved" cannot be valid for every individual in every situation. I would choose the formulation: "Be responsible for what you do and what you do not do - personally and socially." However, this dictate is already included in the first two postulates.

I believe that the surprising efficacy of the methodical instructions basic to TCI lies in the fact that their axioms and postulates are clarifications of existential phenomena and not interchangeable rules. The postulates demand the recognition of reality as experienced personally, instead of setting dogmas as an authority. Lack of consciousness in regard to one's own position as chairperson misleads us to worshipping authority as such and to a denial of genuine authority. I am always the authority wherever I represent reality. For instance, the reality of knowing that fires burn and that I must protect the hand of a baby and children can and must learn how to handle matches. The authority of the adult accompanies and helps children to grow - "Whoever gives less than necessary is a thief; whoever more, a murderer."

Auxiliary rules

"Auxiliary rules help, if they help!" They can help only if they are applied humanely. Soulless, mechanical communication is not humane.

Lists of auxiliary rules have come and gone and some still exist. Many of them were posted as "The Complete TCI" on the walls of all sorts of groups in the sixties and early seventies. They must be judged, however, according to their adequacy for the group concerned. Auxiliary rules have to protect or complement axioms or postulates, otherwise they could be serving a contrary spirit, the sort of which they should be opposing. Intolerance and dogmatism are possible names for this contrary spirit.

Auxiliary rules, which are almost always useful, are demonstrated in the following examples:

- "Be cautious with generalisations." They have the tendency to interrupt the group process. When that appears to be necessary, however, generalisations can be helpful.

- "If you ask a question, say why you ask it and what that question means to you. Speak for yourself and avoid interviewing." Questioning elicits a specific information which is to be given. Quite to the contrary, however, questions are often posed as an avoidance game in which the individual is avoiding expressing his or her own experiences or thoughts and is hiding behind the question.

- "Hold back your interpretations of others as long as possible. State preferably your own personal reactions." Statements in the I-form are more open, more sincere and more effective than in the you-form.

- Be aware of your body's state of being and the signals it is sending out. And be aware of those of others, also.

- If you make comments about the conduct or the character of another participant or a person not present, state additionally what it means to you, that he or she is the way he or she is (that is, as you see it).

I introduce auxiliary rules explicitly only if they appear to me at that moment helpful and if it is possible to explain them.

TCI techniques, just as the auxiliary rules or postulates, can unfortunately also be applied without consideration for the axiomatic values which are essential to TCI. It is possible, namely, for communication technologies to communicate everything, and for that reason they should be bound to the philosophical and ethical requirements of the TCI axiomatics. Otherwise they might cause harm, both unwittingly as well as demagogically.

Only later in my work came my realisation that the importance of values which promote life must advocated explicitly, even though this is implicitly included already in the hypothesis of dynamic balancing. If I consider myself, the others, the task and the globe as balanced with a systemic immanence, then the ethical basis is clear. "There is nothing more practical than a good theory ," says Kurt Lewin.

The Theme

There is no such thing as a group without a theme. There is only a congregation of persons who are in the same room together by chance, for instance, on an excursion, people in a railway station, at a cocktail party.

The theme in TCI is most frequently a verbalised issue. It must be briefly and clearly formulated, so that it can be remembered by each person (without impaired memory) and it should elicit enthusiasm for the task. It serves as an inspiration for thinking and for phantasising. Sometimes, especially with young children, the same concentration can be induced for a theme by placing an object in the centre of the circle or by telling a story. With adults, a verbalised theme is usually preferable. The theme has a summoning quality. Themes are the co-leaders.

A clear theme is an essential element of the TCI structure. Other structure elements are, for instance, the realities of room and time, dividing into large, middle-sized and small groups (possibilities for tackling problems, regard for culture diversity of the participants and their previous experience).

TCI in European Congresses

September 1968, Vienna/Austria: An international congress for psychotherapists. I have been invited by a German medical doctor, Helmut Stolze, to a symposium about supervision. He had read my article in English, "A Psychosomatic Approach to Psychoanalysis" (1955). I did not know him. My reply to him from the U.S.A. was that I had been involved in the previous years

to a lesser extent in working with individual clients, rather with socially oriented group methods. Whereupon he invited me for a different subject.

Eight colleagues, six speak German, one French. My shyness prevents my speaking German, a language with which I have had little contact during the last three decades, and none whatsoever professionally. After the symposium there was considerable interest in a spontaneously organised demonstration workshop in TCI. In that workshop I tried to work in two languages. The first threads in a web of contacts leading to personal friendships were being spun, making a return to Europe at all possible for me, since I was happy living in America.

Bonn,/Germany,1969: A congress of the German General Association for Group Analysis and Group Therapy (DAGG). It was one of their earliest congresses. I received an invitation from Annelise and Franz Heigl-Evers, whom I had met in Vienna. Aside from them, I no longer knew anyone in Germany. They had immediately engaged themselves in a most friendly way for my work and for me personally and exerted a supporting influence on my returning to Germany. I did not realise when I accepted the invitation that I would not just be leading a workshop, but a large plenary session. The topic was sensitivity training.

My reaction to the mistake was euphorical. During those many years in Zurich and New York I had dreamed of being able to utilise some of my psycho-dynamic experiences and knowledge in educational and political contexts, working towards a world in which there woulsd be no Holocaust, no war, no torturing. Even though I was already aware at that time that such pioneering work would only be able to realise the minutest part of this goal, still the call of the tiniest bird counts in the forest concert. Rachel Carson had already described that in her book, "The Silent Spring," in the 1960's - premonitions and warning signals of a deadly planetary catastrophe. When I heard that I was to address a plenary ses-

sion of a congress with several hundred participants, I felt the exaltation in me: "Here I am and I can accomplish something here - bringing the things from America which I had learned and had also contributed to myself. Most importantly: learning how children can be raised to be more humane human beings and learning how we ourselves can become more humane. I want to bring TCI to Germany, to a Germany which was never a completely Nazi Germany! Now I have the opportunity to bring it back to where it is needed!"

I approached the speakers and discovered that the lengthy morning session was to be filled with their reading prepared papers. I suggested that the speeches be put aside and that a discussion among colleagues in the form of a symposium take their place. Every one of them knew what they thought and wanted to say, anyway, and it would probably be more interesting for the individual speakers, and also for those in the auditorium, to be present during a live discussion, than listening to papers being read. There must have been something in the tone of my voice which convinced them. At any rate, it happened as follows: approximately a third of the time was allotted to the discussion on stage, two-thirds for my introduction and discussion with those in the auditorium. Those who had been scheduled to speak accepted my challenge. Only later did I come to realise the extent to which such a challenge in Germany at that time must have sounded impossible! And yet they all agreed to it.

I introduced myself to the audience in the large lecture hall: "First of all, I want to tell you that I am very excited and glad to be in Germany again for the first time and to be able to speak to you. . ." After a few additional introductory remarks, I drew the TCI compass with the triangle and a transparent, multi-layered globe on the board and explained their meanings. Now, of course, it was impossible to conduct an interactional group, in which everyone would be able to speak and get to know everyone else, within

this brief time and in such a large hall and with so many people. Also, we had only one microphone, which was on the stage. But it would be constructive if we could remain together for this brief time, not breaking up into smaller groups. Thus it is an important task for each individual "I" to make the most of this situation and to identify with the other individuals present.

After the symposium and my introduction, I asked everyone to be silent for a few moments, during which I invited the participants to listen and consider very carefully, to be aware of themselves - of their bodies, minds and souls - and when anything was of considerable importance, to come to the microphone and say it in two to three minutes.

At first there was a small line behind the microphone and I tried to intervene gently at the end of the two or three minutes in order to limit the speaking time, which was not followed conscientiously. A crucial scene then occurred, during which about 15 students were talking relatively loudly with one another in a corner of the room. In answer to my invitation to them that they should rather come to the microphone because they possibly had something interesting to relate and because their talking together was disturbing, they said mockingly, "Gracious lady, what we're talking about is more important." I countered that I was not a "gracious lady," but Ruth or Mrs. Cohn. The audience reacted with considerable aggression towards the students, which I was able to mollify successfully. The students had not really acted differently than the persons who had spoken more than two to three minutes - these were just ground rules, not the law! After that, the students felt that they were being taken seriously and proceeded as the ground rules "ordered" - they came to the microphone and spoke briefly, "Your speech concerning sensitivity training is nothing less than the attempt of powerful capitalists leading the workers around with a carrot on a stick." For them, modern methods in group work served only the purpose of detracting the people away from essential economic questions.

The aggressive reactions within the audience disappeared. Students who were disruptive had been turned away from other plenary sessions - now they were allowed to state their opinions. A discussion arose between the "bourgeoisie" and the revolutionary young persons, which continued after this session in other rooms.

My missionary passion, which had never been fulfilled before and would never be again, and the longing for new forms of communication and also the self-experiencing for those present, probably provided a gateway towards desired changes in the usual traditional lecturing and group discussion into a form of interaction. An important factor was certainly that I came as a German Jew, with an interesting and reconciling manner, and that I was apparently working towards inner and outer peace.

From that day on, no matter how many courses I offered or were offered by those few of my colleagues who could speak German, whom I recommended, all were promptly filled.

Lindau/Germany, 1971: The annual "Lindau Medical Congress for Psychotherapy." The director of the congress, Helmut Stolze. The theme, "How do I learn? How do I teach?"

I begin with a demonstration group on the stage. I state directions for the beginnings of communicating on the basis of TCI, i.e., clear statements, attentive listening, choosing when to speak without bowling over the others or being bowled over one's self. Then small groups within the auditorium, in which the theme is to be further developed. Each group of three participants in the even numbered rows are to form a group of six with the three persons sitting behind them. A seat is to be left free between the groups of six so that they can hear each other better.

From the distance I observed animated faces. The noise in the auditorium was like the ocean's roaring. I was pleasantly excited.

Back in the plenum: suddenly deathly silence in the room. And then a hailstorm of questions: "What is your understanding of the

terms 'teaching and learning'?" - "Are they the same?" - "Where is statistical verification as proof for what you are doing - is there any educational value in such groups?" "What are the historical sources of TCI?" "What do other authors have to say about this?" etc., etc.

I was entirely unprepared for these questions. Also, TCI was too new for even considering such statistical evaluation. It had been 30 years since I had read German, and even now, as I was speaking, I had to search for German words. The only thing that I knew for sure was that I would not lie. And so I repeated a few times in a row, "I don't know."

None of my few German speaking acquaintances came up to me as the auditorium was emptying. I felt disheartened and ashamed! Then, Helmut Stolze, in charge of the organisation, approached me with a radiant expression and said, "And if you hadn't done anything more than repeating three times in a row, 'I don't know,' there isn't anything better you could have done for German academia. That has never happened in a German university. That will totally loosen up and enrich the atmosphere of this congress - you'll see." - I believe that he was right.

The hail of criticism had indeed intimidated me, and yet also inspired me to further study. The years in America had given me a great deal, especially through personal contacts and innovative work. I had learned much from other models of group interaction, gaining from the experiences of the pioneers in other schools of thought. But I had not been aware of the historical context. Fate and guilt had contributed to the alienation from my previous passion for reading. Being a refugee and a single mother with two children for many years, changing languages twice, sickness, etc. A phase of broadening my professional horizons now began, especially through reading. For example, I needed the stimulation of knowledge from modern physics and oriental thought. Ten years later, this found its issue in my book "Lived Histories in Psychotherapy".

The rental of my apartment in New York ended in 1973. I had never wanted to live in a large city. I began searching for a place to live where I would have the opportunity to work with an organisation wherein I could practice TCI. I might even find or build a seminar centre, for example, somewhere in the mountains of North America. I left this issue open and began travelling with TCI through America and Europe, with neither an apartment nor possessions, except for the contents of five suitcases.

My first station on the way was Clark University in Massachusetts as guest professor for TCI. First impressions of the discrepancy between the academic tradition and the needs of young persons, who were turning away towards gurus and drugs.

My second station was in a centre for young people in Westphalia, Germany, with a project called The Westphalian Co-operation Model (WKM). Under the directorship of Annedore Schultze and Werner Rietz, this project was guided by the vision of the post-war years there of a democratic community among parents, pupils and school authorities. After a period of probation I left knowing TCI to be in good hands. Years later, Annedore Schultze's efforts for WILL-Europe was especially fruitful in helping to spread TCI to East Germany (before 1989), Poland and Hungary.

My third beginning in 1974 has not as yet ended.

Since 1974 in the Ecole d'Humanité

Summer, 1994: Today is a summer morning. Clear blue sky, cool. I have shoved my Danish rocking chair, which I bought fifty years ago in the USA, into my favourite spot, between the opened balcony doors.

These balcony doors were my entryway, through which I viewed my soul's picture of paradise for the first time in reality, then in January of 1974, twenty years ago.

A gentle chain of mountains, forested up to higher altitudes, opening up to the white crowned giants mountains. Between them and myself enough distance that I do not feel constrained. Below to the right and the left a long valley flecked with winter white.

"This is the apartment," said Armin Lüthi, the director of the Ecole d'Humanité, a boarding school in the higher areas near Bern, Switzerland, "if you should decide to work with us." I had been invited by him and his wife, Natalie Lüthi-Petersen, the co-director, in order to be helpful by means of TCI group work and consultation for the staff.

Working here? came the stuttering within me - this countryside is for farmers and tourists, working here - no! or?

Perhaps I can find God here, over there behind the high mountains, wearing their winter white - and then another voice, that of my friend, Alfred Farau, who had died recently, came answering back from over there, "I had promised to write your biography. I died too soon. Now write mine!"

And then Armin, who was really standing by my side, continued, "But you have to be aware of the fact that we have no money." And I answered, as if from a clairvoyant sleep, "And I have no time" - and I knew that I had said yes. It was not a dream, but reality. To this day I know that on that day in January I walked in a befogged and yet entranced state from the balcony through the room, which was full of boxes and packed luggage. I moved into the "big view with a small apartment" on June 14, 1974. "Seeking the land of desires with my soul," I discovered the school, in which I could teach TCI and thereby further learn about it, as well as the place from which I could be seeking and teaching outside of the school.

A contract with apartment and without money. I earned money through my private practice and supervision, through courses and workshops I led for others. For those of the Ecole staff who were

interested, I conducted about three weekend workshops annually and one or two sessions during the week. At the beginning I was involved with organisational development, particularly with the two directors - Lüthis - later more with TCI didactics and general problems and successes arising from the teaching situations and the "educational families." I was not engaged in psychotherapy in the Ecole, neither for the children nor for the adults.

Twenty years later I can make this reflection on my work: I wanted to influence an organisation through TCI and I have accomplished this, an organisation which existed before the era of national socialism and which belonged originally to a group of "reformed country boarding schools," representing humanistic ideals. Among those pioneers was Paul Geheeb-Cassirer, the founder of the Odenwald School, who fled in 1934 along with some of his teachers and pupils to Switzerland. The school's spirit was much too liberal and progressive and there was no future for it in Hitler's Germany. In addition, Paul Geheeb's wife, Edith Geheeb-Cassierer, was Jewish. After fleeing, they stayed at first in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, leading to changing the school's name to "Ecole d'Humanité."

Permanent residency there was denied them. And so it came that Edith Geheeb-Cassierer sought and found a spot in the Upper Bern Region, in Goldern, where the Ecole d'Humanité could abide and prosper. Lovely, newer buildings were added. At first, the staff members and the Geheebs ran the boarding school according to the "Family Model." Everyone did everything for everyone and everyone knew every one else. Hans Näf, a psychologist with knowledge of TCI and a friend of Armin Lüthi, proposed that I assume the task of influencing the make-up of the teaching staff, taking into account their wishes and abilities. The problem: while a good many of the older staff members were remaining permanently, the younger ones often left the Ecole d'Humanité relatively quickly. I found out that an important need among the

young teachers lay in learning about the practice of teaching and living together and in finding their own particular place within that. The way in which TCI was effecting the organisation and didactics made this task easier. The Ecole developed away from the "Family Model," which was no longer appropriate, and into organisational structures more adapted to the situation. These provided individual persons with more options in their use of time and space in getting to know each other, in their choice of curriculum and in their use of leisure time. The idealistic-revolutionary spirit which lay at the core of the school from the very beginning had been in fact more concerned with the children and young persons than with the members of the staff. ("Actually we're here just for the children!")

Despite successes which were of permanent worth, this period of time at the start proved to be a difficult one, and my own mistakes were a part of it. In my exuberance to attain "something different," I often acted too hastily, paid too little attention at first to those understandable hurt feelings which change causes, thus triggering off more resistance among some of the older staff members than might have been necessary. On the other hand, the goal to encourage younger staff members to stay on longer was quite successful. The fact that more married couples were applying played a role, since the Ecole d'Humanité has a particular attraction for teachers as couples and with children.

A partially insular character, provoked by the natural landscape and also the personalities involved, is no longer prevalent. There is a radiating from inner regions towards outer ones and from the outer to the inner ones, touching upon the school itself and many of its teachers, who have taught here and who continue to influence other schools and organisations.

Above all, the directors, Armin and Natalie Lüthi, were most implemental in overcoming anxieties and the nuisance of hurt feelings. Several staff members formed a group interested in learning

TCI and these are now the persons who introduce the new teachers to TCI methodology. A number of these teachers and teachers' assistants became competent in TCI and contributed to the enrichment of the teaching in the Ecole as well as in other schools later on.

The new directors and successors for the Lüthis, who will soon be reaching retirement age, both teachers who have been in the Ecole d'Humanté almost as long as I have, have already been chosen - according to democratic procedures. They were included in this democratic process from the very beginning, and the weekly meetings between the old and the new directors are guarantees for a special sort of transition.

The head of the TCI work in the organisation was Volker Dybert. Chosen to head up TCI work in the future are Fréderic Bächtold-Blatter and Sarah Richard-Hudspith. Planned as consulting teaching member of the WILL organisation is Christel Grünenwald. She had been teacher at the Ecole for some years, worked for some time as my assistant, and worked subsequently for different institutions and in continued training for teachers, for example in Basel (ULEF, directed by Elmar Osswald).

Workshop Institute for Living Learning (WILL, New York, 1965)

"I've got it! Now we can teach it."

My group of therapists, who had attended supervision workshops for a number of years, was enthused. "Do you really want to?" "You've known that all along."

Yes, we had given considerable thought as to why this particular way of doing supervision and teaching had become so much more effective, and the participants and myself were being objectively and personally more inspired than by anything else we had experienced up until that time.

"I saw it in a dream." I told them about the image in my dream of an equilateral triangle which revealed to me, after my awakening, the theoretical basis for my way of working: the individual, the interaction in the group, the content, the environmental factors - I had been treating all these things in my practice as equally important. The individual is just as important as everyone altogether, everyone just as important as the content, the content just as important as the place, time and situation in which the group is taking place. Using this working hypothesis as the basis for every group working together, there was now not only the possibility of practising, but also of teaching the method in theory, which opened an overwhelming perspective for us in many aspects - educational, didactic, scientific, organisational, economic, political.

Historically, it was hardly a coincidence that all this was happening in the early 60s in America. The Vietnam War had awakened in many persons a consciousness for meaningless living and meaningless violence. The result was a striving towards more humanity and, above all, justice for those who are weaker. These weaker ones were the Blacks (the majority of the American soldiers!), women, handicapped persons and children. Because of these circumstances, especially those persons teaching in any sort of educational framework became more willing to re-examine political and social traditions and to change them. TCI was and still is a part of this widely spread humanistic movement.

Within the first two years of developing the theoretical basis of TCI and training programs, it became evident that a disintegration of traditions had resulted in an expansion of the fields in which TCI could be applied. It was no longer a method for psychotherapists alone, but was equally applicable and teachable for other persons with political and social concerns - especially teachers and educators at all levels of educational work.

After a further year of training and practice, WILL was officially founded in New York as the teaching institute for the prac-

tice of TCI. The term "Theme-Centered Interaction" (coined by Francis Buchanan, who died at an early age) signifies that the TCI method of conducting group work is not limited to therapeutic work as in group therapy or to encouraging relationships as in encounter groups, but is applicable as well in situations in which an objective concern is being dealt with - that means, any theme or task involving the individual personality, as well as the community of the group members, i.e., training programs, working in teams, living together in the family, organisational meetings, etc.

The name of the institute was the result of Norman Liberman's creative thinking and sense for language, while we were driving for hours together through New York's alleys and over its bridges. We were searching for a name with significance, whose initials would also be meaningful. The word WILL contains the expression "Living-Learning" as a coinage and at the same time indicating an aversion towards the deadening teaching and learning traditions in our school systems and in lifeless organisations. During these years, the following training guidelines were developed:

- knowledge pertaining to being a human being, psychological, philosophical, anthropological, social.

- maturing of the personality and of communities as life-long processes.

The training program should include the following elements:

- Courses in psychopathology for diagnosing and dealing with disturbances within the group. Also, learning to recognise whether changing the situation or intervention is necessary or whether external help is needed. In case of doubt, a medical or psychotherapeutic consultation is necessary.

- Courses in methodology are obligatory requirements, including techniques for maintaining a balance among the factors I-WE-IT- GLOBE.

• Ability to integrate other methods without losing the essential structure of the TCI-system. TCI as a philosophical, especially ethical, system.

• Training in perception, internal as well as external.

• Intuition and interest concerning the current historical and local issues, etc.

• Not being hostile to others or to one's self. Being the chairperson of one's self.

• Chairpersonship for those responsible for training programs - as leaders as well as members of the group - so that they are able to draw upon their own personal resources and abilities and use them within the framework of TCI. For instance, creative, musical or art talents, or particular experience in organisations, expertise, knowledge in languages. If they are not contradictory to the general principles of TCI, each special talent and every trained ability, can be integrated productively by qualified teachers in a training program. It should, however, be made clear that imitation is not appropriate for acquiring these special skills and that a specific training in those areas are necessary. (For example, an art therapist can sometimes provide essential interpretations of pictures, whereas a lay person would tend to be superficial and to cause confusion with interpretations involving identification.)

Furthermore, flexibility as well as steadfastness should be practised, especially in judging training candidates.

• Acceptance and criticism.

• Knowledge of organisational development with TCI and TCI didactics.

• Openness for intellectuality and spirituality.

I recall some of the early training workshops for the first training members, which took place during the open conflicts between

Blacks and Whites: "Segregation, Collision, Co-Existence, Integration," "The Challenge of Change," and also "Freeing Creativity in Writing," and "How Do I Lead Myself? How Do I Lead Others?" etc.

The upward surge in quality, propagation, and numbers of interested persons within WILL and its training program was followed by an organisational depression caused by my decision to return to Europe. Every new idea and every new organisation requires a particular passion and devotion of one or a few persons during a certain period of development in order to become rooted. WILL-America suffered because I left too early. I had to choose and the choice, for personal as well as objective reasons, was for Europe.

1966 The Workshop Institute for Living-Learning - WILL
1972 Das Werkstatt-Institut für Lebendiges Lernen (WILL Europe)
1987 WILL International

Breaking away back to Europe in 1974 was necessary objectively and personally. Still, departing from the children, the grand children, friends and dear colleagues was difficult. Also, I was especially unsettled because of WILL-America, which was too young for my going away.

WILL-Europe was founded for the German-speaking countries in 1972. Within a very short time it became attractive for a good many people in educational and helping professions. Amazingly, there was much interest on the part of religious and church organisations, quite in contrast to America. Especially the church organisations were seeking ways which were appropriate for children and juveniles in order to interest young persons for religion and the church,. The resistance among these age groups against older traditions was very high. Also, there was already a sort of spiritual resistance movement among many adults against a narrow ultra-materialism and ultra-rationalistic view of life, which was

common at that time. A humanistic spirituality tied in with Judaeo-Christian traditions, integrated with new elements from oriental religions.

I experienced, to my great delight, that positive results came out of my ascetic resolution to deal with organisational aspects only in the initial phase. I remained obstinent in organisational affairs because of my conviction - strengthened by my experience in New York - that the founders of an idea or organisation are well advised to retire into the background before their death, so that the original beginnings can be further developed or modified by other persons "without parents." The fact that this has already happened within my lifetime is very satisfying for my understanding of myself as a teacher.

TCI's basic principles have stood the test of time - they are true and effective. The beginnings in America were followed by a deepening and extending of its practical applications in Europe. Because of the considerable interest in training for specific professions and different activities, adjustments, modifications and increased techniques were developed. This was made possible due to the large number of persons who have received and are receiving training in TCI and who work in their own areas with this method. The flexibility towards other methods (which began already in New York through a system of obligatory electives from other fields) contributed to the expansion. Basic principles must be maintained, however, as long as we are practising TCI. The successful applications of this open system contribute to the probability that TCI will continue to develop over a longer period of time.

Other emphases were in topics related to historical issues, especially the women's movement with its enormous influence, in quality as well as quantity, on TCI topics in WILL courses and in the organisation itself. Following current trends, there is now an interest in the emerging men's movement, just as there is interest in

discoveries and themes which were not included in our traditional schooling and which we now want to know too much of or nothing at all (between delusions of grandeur and blindness).

I am also happy that WILL International was founded in 1987. An international overall organisation was thus established with its emphasis in the German-speaking areas of Europe, and is connected with work in England, in the Netherlands, in Belgium and is now spreading out in initial phases in Poland and Hungary. I have heard that sprouts are forming in Africa and Asia.

I experienced special joy in the fact that, even before the reunification in Germany, many private courses in TCI had been made possible by pioneers and groups within the protestant church there. I hope and believe that the present conflicts between the western and eastern parts of Germany can be resolved more satisfactorily, whereby a mini-contribution could be made by the TCI organisations, perhaps especially in Berlin.

The influence of oriental religions, philosophies and wisdom brought new facets into the life and ways of thinking in our culture and in that of WILL members. Similarly, some facets of a growing consciousness for the body and working with the body, which were - because of my experiences through the Elsa Gindler School - present within TCI from the very beginning.

Particularly the emphasis on the acceptance of paradoxes (or apparent paradoxes) had impressed me. "I am not a subtle book - I am a human being including contradictions" (from "Hutten's Last Days," C.F.Meyer). But not only is each single person not without contradiction within himself or herself, this is also true of each human relationship. The dogmatic attitude of the western person, that something has to be either true or false, becomes milder under the oriental influence. Most conflicts cannot be solved in a fruitful fashion if we choose to recognise only an "either - or" and do not search for an "and - and." True progress and true

democracy must be able to integrate minorities, along with their behaviour and opinions. I have been able to initiate this process myself again and again in courses (through much work and with the aid of exercises).

Whenever minority opinions or claims are present, especially those of a political nature, it is worthwhile to include them in the structuring and work at hand in the group. That doesn't mean that it is not necessary to be making clear decisions. Objective pressures are real. However, it is one of my main concerns to be examining objective pressures and the basics in our thinking and feeling which contribute to them - one's own, societal and pretended ones. It is worthwhile to play the game, "What would happen, if I refuse to recognise pressures?" Astounding insights might be the result.

Although the practice of meditation has also existed in Europe and within Judaeo-Christian traditions, meditation as a movement has only just recently arrived in Europe from its oriental roots. My first feelings were of rejection, because I was afraid of a passivity which I might be encountering - that meditation or prayer alone, with no further assistance, would be sufficient to induce improvement.

In the meantime I have made the experience that laissez-faire is not an element of meditation, rather that meditation can lead to a greater sense of community. Dynamic balancing is also important in this regard. Our needs require rest and movement, being and doing. For me meditation has become a "positive action for slowness," wherein hectic and superficiality give way to depth and quiet.

Meditation can set off a spark of creativity and activity and also an understanding which is not entirely rational. Meditation is also an expression of the search for a personal relationship to the universe. Whoever is seeking and living in this way is able to devote himself or herself quickly and quietly to the tasks of the moment - more effectively than our growth-dependent, industrial consumer addictions would presume.

The influence of TCI in differing areas of life is growing. Mostly this is happening through the efforts of many individuals, as well as through their work in other organisations. Organised in about 25 regional groups, there are approximately 150 WILL teaching members and at least twice as many group leaders with a TCI diploma. The number of persons officially in training and those who attend courses on an independent basis is unknown to me, but it is probably a four digit one.

1994: It is true that "time is growing short," and it is just as true that "we have so little time, therefore we must proceed very slowly." (This insight has often been a great help to me and my participants.) We can live well with this paradox. I am hoping that we human beings will be able to decide not to turn our Spaceship Earth into dust prematurely. The magnificence of life on this earth is worth living - even with all of our "buts."

And now I'm asking myself: have I written the essentials of my being in a nutshell? Perhaps to the extent that one can see through peekholes while travelling swiftly by them. I have experienced a marvellous time with people and in my work and I hope that some of that has become visible and fruitful.

Finale

I am sitting here again, just as I did 20 years ago when I discovered my soul in this landscape. I am again sitting between the opened doors to my balcony. The landscape has changed. The mountain chain is partially hidden behind the tops of trees. These trees were then hardly higher than the flowering bushes among which they were planted. Now they overshadow the roofs of the neighbouring chalets. They fill up the gaps created through the transparency of the birch tree branches with greenness. And my inner landscape? My white mountain giants are glowing towards me: "How did you make out with your two big wishes for these times?" I have completed the book of Alfred Farau's by publishing my "Lived History of Psychotherapy" - and my other wish, that of finding God?

I had developed the method of TCI even before it was defined, simply by practising it. For me it was perfectly natural to be stating existential and ethical values, whereas a religious substantiation seemed unnecessary. I knew, however, that the ethical-humanistic basis of TCI allowed room for religious convictions.

My own religious convictions have developed along many an intricate path. As a small child I believed in a well-meaning and just God, who sometimes disappointed me, but who was generally a reliable and friendly judge. Then I doubted. - Grown-ups around me seemed to be using Him to educate me. Young persons tended to be disinterested in God.

Goethe became my teacher. Faust asks Gretchen, "Who is allowed to say His name? And who profess: I believe in Him. Who feel and dare to say: I do not believe in Him?"

I think that Goethe enflamed my own beliefs with his pantheistic faith. God is an universal divinity, which pervades through the coldest of stone, through the racing waters, growing plants and living animals into the human heart - that God lives in me, in you, in everything, as the belief in meaning and as a sanctuary to be protected. I believe that there is no God outside of us which judges, rather a divinity in us which proclaims that life is worth living and that we can experience and put this meaning to practice - not always - not everyone.

This belonged and belongs to my pantheistic faith. Yet, "I am not a completed manuscript - I remain a human being with contradictions." At those times when I doubted or was ecstatically happy, I wrote poetry in which God appeared as a creature one could talk to. I accept this anthropomorphic personalisation, which seems to present a picture of a godly creature with an enduring slight smile!

With the beginning of my ageing, after my return to Europe, the question of the reality of a personal God became acute for the first time. This was also related to the emergence of a new interest in

religion which appeared generally at this time. I developed a certainty that ethics (the good and evil in actions) is not possible without relying on the concept of transcendence.

Perhaps there is something guiding us that is more than the rational conviction that life and society can exist only with the recognition of unconditional ethical commandments. Perhaps the word "revelation" is the revealing of essentials - a faithful astonishment, for instance, of the fact that white mountains and wise persons can show the way towards a loving gratitude.

Chapter 6

FROM COUCH TO CIRCLE TO COMMUNITY

BEGINNINGS OF THE THEME-CENTERED INTERACTIONAL METHOD

Dr. Ruth C. Cohn

Nothing that happens in any one room of any one house between any two people is confined to that one room. The people and the house contain or influence the past, present and future of their environment - thinning out into further-away time and space. Every psychoanalyst and patient in any one room lives in dynamic interchange with the community, and whatever occurs in the treatment room radiates in turn into the world outside.

However, most of us psychoanalysts of 25 years experience are no longer content to treat eight patients a day, three to five times a week, for five years or more - limiting our work to a small number of people while ignoring the tremendous need of individuals and communities. As people, and especially as professionals, we feel the co-responsibility for our globe's life-and-death struggle. We have the choice of striving toward a liveable society or else remaining in tribal frog-perspective, silently or croakingly

anticipating and inviting atomisation.

The Nazi holocaust in Europe and a 33 percent mental casualty rate in the United States gradually awakened us in the 1930's and 1940's. We felt public pressure and personal guilt. We looked for solutions to affect more people and more areas of human concern. The inherent development of our professional emphasis from id- to ego-psychology helped us on our way.

Thus, in the early 1950's many of us left our easy chairs behind the couch for part of the day and took our seats on smaller and harder chairs within the circle of patient groups. Our successes were surprising. We had learned more than we knew. The increasing number of people we treated in groups (or combined group and individual therapy) gained more in less time than many of our patients had gained on couches. We had found valid generalisations and functional psychodynamic concepts. We had learned to respect individuation and personal intuition. From our eight-patient a year depth we had gained training experience and self-analysis. We had learned to read the patient's past and present difficulties in the light of the phenomena of transference distortions and the blocking power of defensive resistances. We had learned to recognise the subtle healing power of acceptance and the full experiencing of people's sensations, feelings and thoughts. We had gained knowledge of intra-psychic and interpersonal dynamics.

Today, living in a social cataclysmic age and dangerously close to a final world war, we urgently search for ways to transcend the world of monorail couches and group therapy circles. We must reach out with whatever little or much we can offer in self and group awareness to the multitude of distraught people who are wishing and seeking for ways to master rather than to be destroyed by delinquent youths, criminal adults, psychopathic riflemen, national and international temper tantrums and nuclear explosions. We need to substantiate our experience that man can change as an interrelated, dynamic fluid entity within a universal field of events and

responsibilities. We are on the way to joining the wisdom of religions and philosophies of old with the new language of modern science; we are not bound by "human nature" with unalterable erotic and destructive drives. Eros and Thanatos can be potent within an infinite range of external and internal modalities. Many psychotherapists do not yet see the necessity nor the possibility for applying our work in the community. Yet could the ancient monks, writing, with golden feather-tips on parchment have possibly foreseen that one day all people would be able and want to read, write and communicate through little black machine-rolled print?

And so it is that many of us, for part of the working day, leave our little couch-centred offices and chair-circled rooms to meet with people anywhere outside in the school's faculty room, at conference tables, in classrooms, in social or political meeting places, at the bank president's luncheon table, in the workman's cafeteria, or wherever groups of people work or live together or wish to develop their capacities in similar directions. We have come to realise that frustrations and hatred need not destroy, but can be lived with, integrated and used. We have learned to assist in opening doors to constructive and creative living. We take our tool kits with us on the road. We hope to win the race against unnecessary decay and global death by social action.

I am one of many psychoanalysts who have started to work with groups in the community. Here the goal is personal growth, which involves respect for developmental potential and the integrity of others rather than concern about pathology. My own contribution in this field is the theory and technique of what I have christened "the theme-centered interactional method." Following is a subjective account of my personal work biography that is intended to serve as a metaphor of our present professional development.

I attended high school in Berlin just before Germany's moral catastrophe. My school was academically progressive. We learned about Einstein's Theory of Relativity, Marx' revolutionary impact,

Shaw's social satire, Spengler's prophetic warnings, even Heidegger's' existentialism and Lindsay's "trial marriage." The name of Sigmund Freud, however, let alone his message, appeared neither in my school textbooks nor in dinner conversations at home. Freud entered my mind only after high school graduation through social contact with a psychoanalyst whose insight into her patients' problems impressed me as profound and exciting. My decision to become a psychoanalyst was instantaneous.

I majored in psychology and studied psychoanalysis. I loved my work both on and behind the couch. Yet I knew that this road to greater enjoyment and affirmation of life was a dangerous luxury as long as it remained the privilege of the few. An advanced civilisation perishes if only the elite can share in its treasures - be they money, music, bathtubs or wisdom. At that time, I could not imagine any way of applying psychoanalysis on a broader scale, yet I felt this to be the ultimate professional goal; our science would have to overcome the awesome images of Spengler's Decline of the West- and the grim cycle of slaves killing masters and becoming victims in turn.

I never doubted the need to modify psychoanalysis for application to the larger community, yet for a long time in the 1930's and 1940's this idea was but a dimly lit lamp in the background of my mind. The space of consciousness was filled with my day's people - family, friends, and patients – under Hitler's long, dark shadow, cast as if from the body of degenerate or lethargic nations. There was the personal battle for identification papers and visas. There were two new countries to live in - adventures, and adjustments. The couch-and-chair combination was a stable and welcome fixture, firmly rooted in my various rooms in Switzerland, New York and New Jersey.

In the United States psychoanalysis influenced many more people than it had in Europe. It pervaded literature, movies and education. Misinterpretations of Freud's first findings led to partial

abandonment of the necessary restraints in child education. The pendulum of the frustration-gratification scale swung far too high on the side of permissiveness. This, I think, was one of many contributing factors to the present-day "Officer Krupke"*syndrome, the proudly whining song: "I'm the victim of causality without a conscience."

Group therapy was an important step toward therapeutic participation of more people in the community at large. One of my closest friends, Asya Kadis, an enthusiastic pioneer and promoter of psychoanalytic group therapy, involved me in this new professional adventure. I followed with trepidation. How could I understand eight people at once when it was hard enough to understand one patient at a time? How could people open up to a group of strangers when they resisted revealing themselves to a single professional person?

Experience preceded conviction. Selected patients improved equally or more in group therapy than in classical or modified analysis. Different aspects of personality strengths and limitations came to the fore. Other constellations of dependency and interdependence were used. The group proved to be less threatening and more ego-strengthening than I had expected. The most fascinating group phenomenon for me was the fact that transference does not need the anonymity of the therapist. They blossom in full encounter with the reality of peers as well as with a more visible analyst. Transference (like defences against anxiety and stress) then appears to be a psychobiological phenomenon protecting the individual's idiosyncrasies to change.

As a group therapist I experienced exposure; one cannot hide in front of sixteen eyes. I felt more vulnerable and, at the same time, more stimulated. I experienced anxiety, curiosity and exhilaration. Yet soon, in my daydreams, I saw the community vision in the back of my mind get brighter and send imaginary beams into groups around green tables of politicians; nations; school boards

of education; the United Nations. If only people in high positions could learn to integrate their individual needs in groups and accept partnership. For infantile cravings do give way to realistic emotional satisfactions once anxiety diminishes. Ghosts cannot compromise; people can.

Ghosts are transferred memories - transferred recollections of man's infantile past, taken in long ago with distorting eyes and accompanied by disordered thought. For children cannot perceive beyond their own radius of experience. Today 's enemy of man is not the other nation or the other group; it is the intra-psychic and interpersonal inflexibility (transference distortion) which prevents us from finding realistic and creative solutions - instead of murder.

My first step toward finding a method and technique for theme-centered interactional workshops occurred in 1955. As an examiner of a psychoanalytic training institute, I had become aware of students' difficulties in recognising and overcoming their own disturbances in therapeutic relationships. Encouraged by my friend and student Mildred Newman, I gave a private seminar, called the "counter-transference workshop."* It was designed for the study and treatment of counter-transference through self-analysis, in a workshop group setting. We discovered that self-analysis, when communicated in the group, initiated a dynamic network of case-related transference as well as a continuing group process. The therapist who revealed himself and his relationship with the patient to the group in free associations stimulated interactional responses in his listeners. These colleagues reacted to verbal and non-verbal communications with their own distorted and realistic responses - sometimes identifying with the therapist's conflicts and traits, sometimes with those of the presented patient. The analysis of their accompanying group interaction nearly always led to the recognition of the underlying therapist-patient conflict.

Example: A patient struggled with a hostility problem by not paying his fee. The analyst, unaware of his anger about the patient's silent

rebellion, accepted the non-payment as expressing the patient's "reality situation." He was, however, half aware of his rationalisation. He shied away from bringing up the money issue. In the middle of the case presentation, one of the participants broke the accepted rule of silence during the initial case presentation by giving advice to the troubled colleague. The presenting therapist responded gladly. Neither of the two therapists reacted to the group's and the leader's protestations. Thus, the transference-counter-transference constellation between patient and therapist was reflected in the rebellion of the two therapists against the rule of silence. They refused to accept the authority of rule and leadership, as the patient had refused to accept the rule of paying the therapist. The analysis of the here-and-now, together with the therapist-patient conflict brought clarification. The unconscious re-enactment of the analyst-patient entanglement, and the exploration of this acting out, is typical for the use of the group in the counter-transference workshop.

The counter-transference workshop was, to my knowledge, the first theme-centered interactional group in existence. Here, the theme is reflected as well as interpreted by the participants. The leader is a participating member of the group, sharing in all functions - presentation of cases, emotional interaction and interpretations. The leader carries the additional responsibility of keeping theme and interaction in focus. The basic rule of all theme-centered interactional workshops was established in this first counter-transference group; to keep theme and interaction simultaneously in the focus of awareness. They are like two track of a railroad, - if either track swerves to the central part of another, the train cannot travel.

For some years the counter-transference workshop remained the only such theme-centered interactional workshop. I used and demonstrated the method in many professional settings. At a workshop meeting of the American Academy of Psychotherapists, a colleague, William Zielonka, approached me with a question as to whether I might apply this method to problems of management

relationships. He worked as a staff psychoanalyst in a large industrial firm.

The president of the firm was a person of broad interest. His success was based in part upon his ability to concentrate on people rather than on material facts alone. He was interested in individuals, their capacities and shortcomings, and even in maturational dynamics.

I found myself working with scores of men (and one woman!). I knew little or nothing about business. I was invited to attend a management meeting without any instructions. After more than a half hour I decided that I had to do something. I explained during a brief silence that my business was not Business, but Feelings. I conveyed that I had imagined sitting behind a soundproof glass wall, watching the men's expressions. I saw unexpressed boredom, resentment and anger in their faces and posture. I stated my assumption that such feelings interfered with the communication that is necessary for our work. After a short silence, a tornado of open feelings burst into the previously stifled atmosphere.

My observations were confirmed and rejected, my interventions appreciated and scorned. I learned that day some specific rules for work with staff relationships, which were borne out in all subsequent work:

(1) The group therapist-leader must know the hierarchy of staff functions before he intervenes; (2) a positive working relationship with top management must take priority before working with other staff groups; (3) themes must be established prior to meeting with any group.

My first five-day stay in the industrial firm was a fumbling trial-and-error experience with various chance-composed groups. Dr. Zielonka's unswerving support and the president's patient tolerance kept me from folding up altogether and allowed me time in which to tailor the counter-transference workshop's interactional

method to the concerns of a business society. (My dream vision sought to flicker its light into the realm of blue-collar workers.) The theme was "management relationships." The method was to use the interaction of the present group to throw light on the intrapsychic and interpersonal conflicts of staff members.

The therapist-consultant leading a management relationships workshop encounters resistance patterns that are specific to work with organisations. On my first job, a staff resistance was expressed by attempts to use me as a judge of various employees' abilities, as a diagnostician of their pathology, or as a messenger for various requests from one person or department to another. I maintained the position that my sole function was to promote awareness of feelings and conflicts. This position, of course, represents the psychoanalyst's professional attitude, whether it is with regard to individual analysis, therapy groups or community workshops. All exploration is aimed at awareness of conflicts and circumstances, but does not take responsibility for the management of people's lives.

Work with this particular group of executives continued intermittently for somewhat less than two years, at which time a reorganisation of the industrial concern took place. From that time onwards I have functioned in the role of a visiting group leader for staff relations in other institutions, hospitals and guidance centres.

The staff relations work, as well as all other subsequent theme-centered interactional workshops, presented me with an unexpected phenomenon which necessitated a shift in my theoretical position. Many participants in such workshops experienced changes not only in their thinking and overt behaviour, but also in basic emotional attitudes. This raised the complex consideration as to whether a regressive phase is necessary or even functional in psychoanalytic therapy.

In every therapeutic process regression and progression take place simultaneously. This means that the patient displays immature, fixated personality traits while striving for maturationally ad-

equate responses; he may also experience regressive feelings even while recognising their inappropriateness. In classical psychoanalytic practice, experiences of repression are both promoted and emphasised. The re-experiencing of conflicts on lower maturational levels is thought of as providing a forum for better solutions and for reorganisation on a more realistic, mature level. In contrast, people in interactional groups that focus around a given theme of personal interest function generally on their highest level of achievement and self-esteem. The feeling of being worthwhile is supported by the therapist-leader's positive and integrative responses to what is brought forth in the group. The group members invariably follow this lead of constructive use of all phenomena, including negative feelings in interaction. The individual group member experiences himself as important and as having specific value. This establishes for him a safe emotional foothold. If the patient likes and respects himself and feels the group's support, a vertical plunge into regressive experience appears much less threatening than when feelings of childishness and impotence prevail. His tight hold on the experience of being worthwhile in the workshop group, therefore, encourages his further exploration of internal and interpersonal conflict, weakness and failure. Insight into present or past events of which the person is ashamed becomes more readily available, communicated and condoned under these circumstances.

Example: A, a high-level executive, experienced his "having to be right" in the workshop group as he had in business meetings. His opponent B suffered from giving in at all times and "having to be at fault." A and B had been interlocked in stifled personal and work relationships. I described as a matter of course these aspects of their communication pattern of which they had not been aware. I also mentioned the frequency and painfulness of similar constellations elsewhere. A's and B's recognition of this dynamic "lock" led to shortcut flashes of deep emotional impact.

The managers recognised their previous avoidance of coming to grips with these character traits. We then talked about the previously discussed business issue in which A had been unreasonable and B had submitted to him against his better judgement. A then volunteered that communication with his parents had depended on "being right." B recognised that he was forever competing with his masochistically suffering father. (I did not mention any hypothesis of A's or B's psycho-dynamic background which could easily be inferred from a psychoanalytic frame of reference but does not belong in the framework of interactional workshops.) Such dynamic interplay is quite similar to events in group therapy. However, in staff-relationship workshops, the discussion is at this point guided toward the theme rather than toward further exploration of individual dynamics.

As I gained in skill with these theme-centered interactional workshops, I began to test out and refine further the method for various other themes, groups and purposes. Most themes combined concepts or skills from psychotherapeutic or other interpersonal concern. The method appears to be especially productive for skill improvement or research purposes in the fields of social sciences. Human experiences, intellectual approaches, outside facts, and purposeful goals are considered simultaneously. This allows for greater depth of vision than investigation of separate faculties. Research workshops on "Encounter and Interpretation," "Freedom and Control in the Psychotherapeutic Relationship," "Body Awareness and Body Touch in Psychotherapy," etc., have been investigated by experienced colleagues and myself in this manner. Other workshops were given to groups of lay people around themes such as "Freeing Creativity," "Training Intuition," "Psychological Conditioning and Ethical Choice", "School Requirements and Individual Needs", "Challenge of Change," etc.

The first consciously selected topic for a thematic workshop was "Training in Emotional Skill." The program was a weekend workshop with the Los Angeles Society for Clinical Psychologists

in Santa Monica held November 23-24, 1963.

On Friday, November 22, President Kennedy was assassinated. The workshop on emotional skill proceeded. We were all shocked. Our emotional state put the workshop theme into microscopic focus. Therapists live through periods of strong emotions - love, hatred and mourning, yet continue working with patients. Under such conditions, we have to use our personal resources and skills to cope with our own inner preoccupations and simultaneously to continue functioning in the interest of the patient.

I, therefore, included our present emotional turmoil into the structure of the weekend workshop. On Saturday morning, I started the group with a request for silence and the suggestion that we be wherever we then were in our feelings and thought; to include ourselves and our patients in our awareness; and to ask ourselves how we experienced "being here in this group at this time."

The series of sessions had intense impact; there were tears, empathy, love and scorn. Patients and their anticipated reactions came into focus. A second surge of emotions was experienced when we received the news on Oswald's murder. We learned a lot about our emotions and their impact upon others. It was an unfortunate yet rare chance to be in a group of self-searching psychologists who experienced the same emotionally shocking event at the same time, each with his own reaction pattern, yet each striving for awareness of what was going on within himself and the group.

With the tragedy as a point of departure, we discussed the varied ways in which we use emotional upheaval in therapeutic practice according to our beliefs, skills and personalities.

We discussed various ways to deal with our emotions while on the job; we can put emotions aside and work as if we were outside ourselves; we can use emotions by fusing them in intra-psychic experience with those of the patient (like letting my sadness

discover his); or we re-share emotions with patients in overt expression. Any of these choices can be either beneficial or detrimental. Emotional skill means to be aware of my emotions and the patient's and to find an adequate mode of expression. It must be honest and functional for both patient and therapy in their intended work.

The weekend experience of Kennedy's death left me with a deepened sense for human emotions and a heightened awareness of the importance of interactional workshops for professional training or community work.

In addition, new ideas about interactional workshop techniques were evolved. Silence and thoughts had been consciously used during this weekend workshop; they have been too often neglected in psychoanalysis. Although for many years I had occasionally asked patients to be silent rather than to communicate defensively, I had not appreciated the need for silence in psychotherapy as a necessary element. We had this weekend experienced silence as relief and a step toward balance. Silence in the group means the experience of being a self without being alone. Individuation within a community is an active experience. We live in the many dualities that Nature provides - ebb and tide; seeding and fruition; separateness and union. We do need both silence and communication.

Since that weekend, more often than not I have initiated interactional workshops with prolonged periods of silence and three subsequent instructions; (1) to concentrate on thoughts about the given theme; (2) to concentrate on feelings and experiences of being silent in the group; (3) to concentrate on some special task instructions worked out for the theme under discussion. The third instruction always connects experience and thoughts around the theme, feelings within the present group setting and an immediate task with reference to the theme.

Example: Theme: "Responsiveness and Responsibility of the Psychotherapist" (therapists): Third suggestion: "How do you feel

about my making this request?" Here communications may range from anger about my "lack of responsibility" in - not lecturing about the theme, to happy acceptance of the challenge to think and feel rather than to have to listen.

Slowly I converted my entire private and training institute seminars and supervisory groups into theme-centered interactional workshops. The method leans heavily on acceptance of opposites. Freud advised us to lead the patient to the past if he stays too long in the present and into the present if he ponders about the past. Similarly, the theme-centered group is guided back and forth between intellectual considerations and emotional experiences; between intra-psychic and interpersonal involvement; between intra-group and outside world phenomena; between strict adherence to the theme and free associations and interactions. The leader functions within this model in the duality of being a participant group member who thinks, feels, and reveals himself, and as a leader who uses his background knowledge to steer away from group pathology, regressive movement, and fixation to either side of the chosen theme.

A very mundane experience became a fruitful stimulus in furthering the application of this theme-centered interactional approach: One spring day in 1965, I visited the home of a friend, a young salesman who had been selling the Encyclopaedia Britannica with minimal success. As it happened, a prospective customer had inadvertently recorded the man's sales talk and my friend now proudly played it back for me. The speech was efficient, concise, and knowledgeable, but there was also discernible in it (unnoticed by him) a little child whining for attention almost literally pulling at his mother's skirt. In the background was the prospective customer giving some verbal signs (and probably many non-verbal ones) to his wife to ask whether supper was ready. The salesman, eager to give his beautiful speech, was oblivious to anything but his purpose and his enthusiasm for the encyclopaedia.

I was struck with the sudden insight that interactional workshops would help this young man to become aware of people and of his own insensitivity. Such a workshop could help this young salesman to be a more aware person and even to sell more encyclopaedias. It might help doctors and nurses to respect each others' and their patients' emotional needs; it might help racial groups to establish contact and understanding. The method and techniques of theme-centered interactional workshops could contribute in an infinite variety of ways to people's effectiveness in living.

In the spring of 1966, influenced by observing an inter-racial group of therapists who met to explore their own remnant prejudices, I initiated several inter-racial thematic workshops as a tryout for further inter-racial work in the community. Winsted Adams, a Negro therapist, and I led a weekend workshop with civil rights workers which was encouragingly successful. We explored relatedness and prejudice within our own group and pursued the cultural experiences that had brought about such feelings within us. We experienced (rather than talked about) our distrust and our blocks in communication, and worked at our assorted feelings and thoughts. One white and one Negro woman came to mutually understand their basic dynamics as the result of having been children of isolation who "distrusted everything but cats and trees". A militant Negro teacher became aware of the relevance and usefulness of awareness of personal feelings and internal change in this world. A white teacher rediscovered the need for tender communication that he had forsaken after he grew up. A Negro man was surprised that a white woman liked his looks but disliked his arrogant, boring speeches he had assumed the reverse was true. A white man came to understand how his careless forgetting of a phone call had aroused suspicions of prejudice in a Negro coworker. At the start of the weekend, the group nearly exploded through the intensity of their hidden hostilities and distrust. At the last session, the group decided to continue their sessions without the departing consultant leaders.

The method of theme-centered interactional workshops, described in this chapter has evolved from private psychoanalytic work, relatively independent of other group work in the interactional field. However, it grew out of the same experiences, influences arid stimuli which have guided the endeavours of the national training laboratories, sensitivity groups and research centres for group consultation, with which I came into contact only after having parted from the solitude of exclusively psychoanalytic practice. Similar ideas, methods and professional activities are springing up, in various parts of the country at this time. We hope we are not too late.

Chapter 7

THE ISSUE IS VALUES

Dr. Ruth C. Cohn

This excerpt of a chapter has been taken from a major publication of Ruth Cohn's, "The Lived History of Psychotherapy" (1984), which demonstrates how our personal experiences are intimately entwined with the major streams of historical developments. Here we are challenged to regard our values not as solely a topic for thinking and discussion, rather in their potential to influence our everyday affairs and the course of history in general. (ed. note)

The issue is values . . .
in deciding between the right of the stronger
and that of a loving justice

My concern is that the ethical values of human beings, such as the reverence for nature and the love of one's neighbour, have had so few practical consequences despite the efforts of philosophical and religious doctrines over thousands of year, so that they were displaced again and again by physical, warlike and economic power, by the "right of the stronger". Power and revenge have not disappeared, even in private spheres, although public opinion and laws moderate their effects. Individuals who are violent are perhaps no longer celebrated as warriors and victors. However, the stronger

- often richer - party is the recipient, just as he has since the beginning of time, of more justice than the weaker and poor. The warnings and threats of philosophers, artists, poets and prophets, as well as the founding fathers of religions have changed very little in this regard.

In an age of one-sided Darwinism it is especially difficult to recognise the right of the stronger as an injustice in regard to equity and charity. For the exponents of Darwinism can point with their index fingers, and their eyes, ears and intellect as well, to the fact that the evolution of the plant and animal worlds always rested on the right of the stronger, because only stronger plants and animals survive and can execute the next developing step.

This Darwinist argument can be countered from the axiomatic point of view that ethics, justice and charity are available only to human beings, since their origins are in regions inaccessible to a conscious experiencing by plants or animals. Intellect and thinking, together with their abstracting, reflecting and ethical potential are germane to the humane species - a level of evolution that includes something new, namely a "conscious spirituality." Certainly evolution often proceeds in small steps. However, sudden transformations have also occurred, in which an atavism of an earlier evolution levels is still apparent. Is the "right of the stronger" an atavism from the non-intellectual animal empire?

For about a century the planet, life on it and the customs of human beings have been changing at a furious speed, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Human knowledge and abilities escalated the possibilities of change almost to infinity. Reflecting about the quality of these changes, however, has been short-changed in recent decades. The advancement of life cannot just mean more knowledge, more know-how, more people, but must also carry responsibility for the humane, for the self-improvement of persons as persons, because the essential quality of the human being as a human being is his spirituality, which enables him to assume responsibility.

Animals generally have only *one* possibility in adjusting to realities. They live within the frame of reference of their set of laws with relatively narrow leeway for their activities within their ecologically limited districts. They defend these respective to their specific inherited manner. Evolutionary changes happen without their assisting consciously.

Human beings, on the other hand, are capable of more than conforming to a given set of laws. They have co-creating abilities - for example, in the conservation and advancement of life's ecology or in its destruction. An animal's level of evolution could signify a regressive temptation for human beings - he can strive to be the strongest in his area and he can refuse to view the wholeness of his own person and the wholeness of mankind. Seen this way, we as a human race have left entirely reasonable possibilities in supporting and caring for the planet unnoticed and have remained singly, and as nations, fully on our course towards destruction, as if it served a purpose to be defending our areas. Actually, it is easy for our intellect and spirit to grasp that our ability to secure food and raw materials for everybody would be sufficient, if we would invest the ingenuity of our thinking for that instead of for the defence of "private areas" - be they of a more geographical, more financial or more ideological kind or whether they pertain to race or class. We are not at the mercy of fate as were the dinosaurs, for we can decide whether we will be co-responsible for the disaster of our downfall or whether we will fight against it. Many small steps could lead to a quantum leap of the spirit.

There are also examples in the history of evolution, however, of complete mutations which happen suddenly and not merely through small steps leading slowly to change. There is the leap between the friction between stones and the moment a spark springs up, and between hot water and the moment when it boils. Not all species can be explained without this hypothesis of suddenness, probably not even the emergence of the human spirit.

Also in psychotherapy healing proceeds as a rule in small, correcting steps. However, there are sometimes sudden "therapeutic leaps," as in breaking through the bottleneck of emptiness, which can lead to sudden healing changes in individuals. I think it is possible - I would almost say probable - that the total psyche of mankind is presently in a bottleneck and that our fear could lead us to break through these straits. I think it is probable that the majority of mankind will very soon rebel against billions being spent for devilishly ingenious overkill machines, while at the same time so many people do not have sufficient money for food, housing, clothes, education - for those things which are worth living for, not dying for. This bottleneck experience could be healing, in that heresies would be exposed, such as living in unlimited luxury and nurturing thoughts of "the enemy" - and that by healing the earth, we could help overcome the right of the stronger.

Through our ability to make decisions, mankind was dispelled from the paradise of an unconsciousness of good and evil. Human values are pragmatically and mentally inevitable because of our abilities to abstract, to think ahead, to identify with others, to love and to be responsible. Commands such as, "Thou shalt not kill!" - "Thou shalt not torture!" - "You shall not hurt unnecessarily (sadistically)!" - are integral parts of our compass.

Each evil deed that destroys life, love or community, has many sources, just as it in turn flows into many rivers. Our personal responsibility is embedded in our surroundings, in the community in which we live, which has furthered us and furthers us and/or has impeded us and impedes us. We are cared for lovingly and/or wounded hatefully or indifferently. Some persons have a difficult struggle in becoming autonomous, others receive it almost protectingly as a gift.

Those things that he brings along into the world and those that he meets up with determine the degree to which a particular person is maturely autonomous. Neither is we solely guilty for our

evil deeds nor are our good deeds based solely on our merits, just as we are not totally responsible for the good and evil happening in our surroundings and in our society. Since each person is a self-sufficient part of the community and at the same time a sharing partner and dependent on it, the community is also jointly responsible for what the single independently-interdependent person experiences and does.

Possessing guidelines does not mean to be a judge. Why a person acts the way he does and not differently is determined by too many factors - personal ones and those caused by the system, those provided and those freely chosen - than that we could judge another person. Even judging ourselves is possible only conditionally. This does not mean, however, that we do not have any ethical guidelines and standards that can be regarded as inalienable. The limits to our ethical ability to judge are narrowly defined. For guilt and fate are entwined with each other, and *the way towards a level of consciousness on which "we know, what we are doing," continues to emerge.*

These thoughts are important to me. It means that we should practice moderation when we pronounce others or ourselves as guilty or innocent and that we should not accuse self-righteously, but should also not be appeasing towards everything and everyone. It means also that we should waste less time and energy in condemning ourselves and others and more time and energy on finding and inventing situations, which are facilitating for us and others in realising respectively the best in us.

Humanistic education tries to counteract fixed reactions of any kind. Hostility and apathy are feelings, which we should accept as feelings. At the same time we can try to increase our tolerance for frustration on the one hand, while fighting against or avoiding over-frustration on the other hand. Tolerance for frustration rises, for example, if we learn to recognise negative feelings as feelings, that is to say, as messages from within to which we can react in varying

ways. If all is well, we have different possibilities in a given situation: reconsideration, diversion, a cathartic "acting out," self-expression, etc. However, if things go badly, we deal destructively. Using "pressures" as a scapegoat seems to me an especially difficult devil to deal with, since he is ever again an unavoidable wheeling and dealing dictator whom does not easily submit to an investigative eye. Very many pressures dissolve into a multitude of alternative possibilities, when we stop to consider what would happen if we would refuse to submit to them. "If I were to replace the devil's 'pressuring' me with others directions and goals, what alternatives remain when I discover that this pressure is in accord neither with my direction nor my goals?"

It is important to *become aware of one's own shadow, without accepting it, however, as an imperative for one's own deeds.* The integration of the shadow does not mean that "evil is as good as good" (just as the shadow of a tree cannot be as good as the tree). The shadow belongs to us. It is always there, and if we are ready and alert, we can look him in the eye and negotiate with him consciously. Evil becomes our given reality because of the tangle of contradictory needs in us and in our relations with others. The evil in us is challenging us again and again to "maintain cheerfulness in bearing that which cannot be changed, in finding the courage to change that which can be changed, and becoming wise enough to distinguish between the two."

A so-called "nature of the human being" which propagates the right of the stronger is misleading, because its extended arm of destruction, not guided by ethical values, will destroy human kind together with our planet, if we do not discover a truly humane direction.

I dare a comparison between individual therapy and *therapy for humanity:* The right of the stronger is, in my opinion, a disease of mankind. Even those who are presently living in abundance are rarely happy in their locked and numbered concrete apartment buildings, in their high-rises or in their villa fortresses

surrounded by security guards - although surely "the poor rich" are considerably better off than "the poor poor" in their starvation boats, besieged by sharks and pirates, or in contaminated concentration camps behind barbed wire or the parents, whose children die of starvation in their arms. - The fact that today not only hungry persons in the third world are sleeping on tropical streets, but also poor and old people of the first world are spending the night on burning pavements in the summer and freezing in the winter, would not have been considered possible just a few years ago; yet this present reality does not prevent the inhabitants and the governments of the metropolises in the first world from demolishing modest and cheap older apartment complexes or from renovating them comfortably for privileged persons.

Individual therapy and therapy for humanity: the concern in both is for changing and in developing a consciousness for essentials. It's about conscious experiencing of internal endeavours and outer realities. Humanistic psychology and education have contributed a great deal in aiding a large number of individuals in the process of expanding their consciousness. Now our concern is to make an expansion of consciousness available to the masses. The issue is sharing with one another and spreading the news. The issue is understanding hostility for what it is: that blessed state of being able to project evil on the enemy and killing him, instead of getting to know the inner enemy and educating him. These enemies have changeable names, such as "inferiority complex," "resignation," pleasure in "hurting," in "being the victim," in "impertinent luxury," in "self stupefaction," etc.

The issue is to fight with the "force of the soul" for humaneness, inwardly and outwardly - in one's self, in the smallest of circles, in ever expanding circles - and perhaps a new consciousness will spread over the earth like a light network. (Gandhi's "satyagraha," was wrongly translated as "passive resistance." Gandhi: "I was never passive, only provocative.")

The issue is values . . . - in the memories of my childhood and as a refugee

During the process of working on this book, I have wondered how I actually became interested in ethics (and humanistic psychology). Is this question to be answered solely by a natural psycho-dynamic? Are the contents and the importance of the conscience strictly determined during childhood? Or are there also ethical receivers of wavelengths, which, just as with receivers for music, can be furthered or disregarded by the environment, thereby influencing their evolution positively or negatively?

I would like to relate a number of memories that are connected with values, with the hope that colleagues in the different therapeutic schools will do the same. I assume that such "living histories" would uncover relationships between different therapists' personalities, their education and their particular method of choice, thereby revealing the history of psychotherapy, too .

I searched among the many memories of my childhood and youth for experiences that were connected with values. I discovered that a surprising number of them had something to do with the conscience, and just as surprisingly that reflecting on things played a relatively large role in my childhood.

Are the glowing pictures of our early remembrances only glowing because they are memories of events that were especially important to us then? Or are we also predetermined genetically and mentally through receiving patterns that are alerted by certain events? So that we perceive the world just as it has been sketched as a structure into our pre-mental imagination? Are the early memories from our childhood merely inner memories which cover-up as well as disclose psycho-dynamic connections, or do they also have something to do with a fate which is inescapably predetermined or, on the other hand, allows possibilities to influence transcendental powers or to conquer them, thus transforming them?

At first glance: a home like a picture postcard on a blue sunny summer's day. The parents were married for twenty-two years - I was present, until my father's death, for seventeen years. The parents almost never quarrelled; and if it did occur once in a while, it did not go further than raised voices with an annoying tone. "We promised each other that we would never be angry over night." - My mother almost always cheerful, my father almost always serious and either content or nervous. "It goes without saying that we are decent", and "harmony and love" were the favourite expressions of my mother. They occurred inevitably in almost each of the poetical performances for birthday celebrations that we learned by heart. The hierarchy unmistakable: Father comes first, then Mother, then for a while nobody at all, and then the children.

Everything was "correct". "It was fitting" to have two "maids," a "nurse for the children," simple meals (excepting Sunday, of course!), even simpler clothes, presents never in between occasions - however, quite a few for birthdays and on Christmas. Daily two hours walking, because fresh air is good. Afterwards homework. Always an hour's practice on the piano. And after that the question: "What happened in school today?" Everything was neat and clean, without ever becoming a problem. Many books - however, hardly ever intellectual conversations. My mother almost never changed the cook or the maid, but the children's nanny twenty-two times. She was convinced, you see, that she could deal with the children much better herself. That was certainly true. However, it was customary to have a nanny! It wasn't necessary to say, "It is customary." It was all so obvious.

There were also words that labelled values. Included were "justice," "truth," "love," "obedience," "make something of yourself," and above all, "don't make your mother sad". The latter was unquestionably in the foreground of my ethics system.

At first the word justice for me was a word only for adults. The parents said that they dealt justly with us children; they said

also that God knows everything and can look into a person's heart. God is just. So I felt that God was as a judge, just one step higher than the parents were. And if I were to be good and He were to be on my side, that meant above all not offending my mother. I spoke much more intimately with God than with any person. At least before I started school.

• My brother, who is three years older, and I are together in my crib for evening prayers. My mother is there. We fold our hands. My brother does not want to pray, but is busy making faces. My mother has a shocked expression on her face. I expect that God will punish my brother terribly. Nothing happens. My mother simply remains shocked. "What is wrong with God? Didn't He see?

• Obedience is a virtue of childhood. When I was about two and a half years old, I ran enthusiastically through the house shouting, "Don't want to, have to!" I actually recall the pride in this exclamation - I was being obedient! If I was acting the way I should, the sun was shining in the summertime picture postcard on a bright, blue day. The same was true when I could do something well, for example, ice skating or balancing on the iron bar which separated the lawn from the sidewalk.

• It was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The parents and my brother went off to synagogue. "You are still too small. You cannot stay quiet so long." - The parents go only three times a year to the synagogue. "What do you do there?" - "Pray." - "The whole time?" - "Yes, the whole time." - They go without me to the temple. I think: "I am not too small. I can pray for a long time, *too*." I put a white tablecloth on my table, put a small flower vase on it, create a solemn atmosphere and pray. I only know one single, short prayer. I repeat it continuously until the parents and my brother come home again. - "I am not too small. I have been praying the whole time. May I go with you tomorrow?" - "Yes."

If I behaved "right," I got what I wanted. The parents were just, God was just. I only had to be good. And since God was

evidently so just, I "knew" that He could not be so unjust as to let me always be a smaller girl and my brother always the larger boy. So I was firmly convinced that on my sixth birthday, I would become a boy and three years older. I also recall that I told this to somebody and it was laughed about. Then to my dismay, when I woke up on my sixth birthday my situation hadn't changed a bit! That was the reason I now had to take justice in my own hands: I knew that, although the parents were just, older boys were more important than younger girls were! So I would have to become ever better in everything than he, and then I would be more important. I observed everything that he did "wrong": for example, "loitering" after school, not bringing the "right" friends home; having a bad temper - my consequentiality was astounding. I was not only consequential, but also calculating and provoking, because I was most surely in the right, when my brother was violent.

• I was struck by my mother only one single time in my life - and that almost playfully, too - never by my father. However, he struck my brother often, which made me mad - so mad that I suppressed the fact that he had done it for long time.

• In my class there were no boys, but there were class differences. The poor girls in my class were different from me. "One of them even stinks," I thought. "Are they dumber because they are poor?" Hildegard is beaten by her mother when her grades are bad. Because of her grades, she begs with the teacher and weeps, in vain. "How can parents be so cruel as to beat their children?" I think. I find these girls strange. Still I feel drawn to them. It is as if I had a bad conscience for which I must compensate.

• An uncle of mine is judge. I am rarely in his house, since he lives in another city. He talks a great deal about his cases. He is whole-heartedly judge. No innocent person should be found guilty, no criminal offence too severely punished. He examines the smallest of details before he delivers a verdict. He is almost as far away as God, and surely quite as just! I revere him.

• "Jews and Christians are equally good or bad," say my parents. "The important thing is doing good." Jesus is not mentioned in the Jewish religious instruction. "He is not our concern. We believe only in *one* God." Somewhere I hear, "The Jews nailed Christ on the cross, and that's the reason they are bad." Nobody, whom I know, would do something like that.

• Being fair and being truthful are as equally important as justice. I sit with Mama at the piano and sing a children's song: "Li-la, li-la, lo, you know that it's so, li-la, li-la, loo, Mama knows all you do, li-la, li-la, lall, lall, lall, your little finger tells her all." She knows everything, God knows everything, and yet you have to tell them. Is concealing also lying? How can I conceal something if Mama knows everything anyway? At about the age of eight I discover that I can lie without Mama noticing it. Concealing is possible, too. But I do it only with a bad conscience.

• My father says: "If Mr. Schulze does something bad, then they say: 'Mr. Schulze is bad.' If Mr. Levy does something bad, they say it must be the Jews. For that reason *you* must always be good!" I feel an inner rebellion. Papa always speaks about anti-Semitism during his time in school. There isn't any such thing anymore! Why doesn't he stop!

• There are mysteries. Are they connected with good and evil? Evidently I am not supposed to know how children are born. The parents say: "You are still too small." My grandmother says, "My child, there are things between heaven and earth which we do not understand." My brother grins and says something stupid. I look in an encyclopaedia. I find "birth." My mother comes unexpectedly into the room. Does she suspect something? I lie: "I am looking up 'begonias'." I keep on lying until I know "everything." Then I am triumphant: I become a sexual encyclopaedia for my circle of girl friends.

• And so doubts arise in me, doubts about the justice of adults and their love of truth. Why should I not know about matters that

are true, for example, about "birth"? Mama tells me the truth when she says that I was born in her bed. However, she answers, when I keep on questioning as to where *she* had been, "Standing by the desk" she had heard me crying. And her mother said, "My child, there are things between heaven and earth which we do not understand."

• Puberty: How can sexuality be possible *only* within a marriage? How can sexuality outside of a marriage be bad, if it is good within marriage? I simply do not believe that! I believe that sexuality is good when the persons love each other. My father threatens me: "A girl who does that sort of thing abandons the straight and narrow path." I reject his sexual morality. However I am plagued by it for years, especially after his death, when I was seventeen. I seek my defence by reading Benjamin Lindseys *"Fellowship Marriage"* (trial marriage) and other books about sexuality.

• The parents speak tolerantly and respectfully about people. However our nine-room apartment in Berlin has a maid's room, which is a third as large as my own. Two adult women sleep there, and in addition a toilet has been installed. The parents say: "The apartment was built that way!" The monthly wages of a maid are merely sufficient for the purchase of a coat. "That is unjust!" I am disappointed about the parents, the landlord, about social and economic injustice. Why do the employees say "Dear Lady" to my mother, and she says "Maria" and "Rosa" to them?

• I took the values of my parents very seriously. Truth, justice, beauty, love, goodness - I found that all right. I had high expectations of them and of me. I questioned them and myself. However, not the values.

• My father says: "A good shoemaker is dearer to me than a bad doctor." But why did he accept the chamber with a toilet for our "girls"? Why shouldn't we talk with them in the kitchen, and why is there a sign downstairs in the block of flats "Stairway only for Ladies and Gentlemen"?

However, everything was simply all right! And when I began not to find everything all right, my father bought a book about adolescence and tried to understand me.

He was sick for a year. The doctor told neither him nor my mother that it was cancer. A few days before his death on the 31st of December 1929, he said: "We are approaching heavy times. Germany is on the verge of a disaster. I should liquidate the business. We would be better off that way. However, what will happen to my sixty employees? I cannot do that." Two days later he lay in coma. He died on January 4, 1930.

So, this was the situation concerning values in the household of this German-Jewish girl, in which "decency is a matter of course", in a bourgeois atmosphere, in which values were self-evident, in a family in which chamber music was normal and children were financially restricted, even if a slowly growing prosperity would have allowed otherwise ("One should not spoil children").

I found these things quite right: not spoiling is valuable - wanting to have too much is bad; being furious is manly - women are sweet; loitering is the same as "stealing time from our beloved God" being industrious is good. A girl has to learn to wait. Lying is the worst thing that can happen to you.

My childhood conscience was an oversensitive seismograph. If I had done something wrong, then I was inconsolable, often for days. Sometimes it was even too much for the parents. "It's all right now. Just forget it and don't do it again!" Even that did not always work. I despaired about my sins and could not forgive myself. I was just as inconsolable when I was unjustly accused. I always defended myself as if it were a matter of life or death - and exactly that was what I felt. It was a matter of my life.

My childhood memories of right and wrong; of meaningless norms and love of truth, of guilt, remorse and forgiveness - they all found their place within the framework of an economically secure and an

essentially humane and loving home. And yet at the age of eighteen I wrote my first contribution for a children's magazine "The Story of Siddhartha Gautama's Youth" (adapted from Hermann Hesse) - how Siddhartha left the castle of his parents, how he learned of the suffering of mankind outside those protecting walls and how he discovered his life's work in the cause of justice for the poor.

When I was seventeen I worked during vacation time for "The Central Agency for Private Welfare" in Berlin. This agency made small donations in cases where the public welfare no longer provided money. I have only one single memory from that time. A very old father requests sixty cents to buy a piece of material, so that his thirteen-year-old daughter can sew a new collar on an old dress in order to go dancing. The central agency denies the request. I am not permitted to give the girl money myself. The father weeps.

Berlin, 1930. I write the following poem [in Berlin dialect]:

The Tale of an Unemployed Youth

Once I also thought:
"You can't take it any more"
And I set out
from home
And ran like crazy far, far away
To anywhere in order to buy
a rope or something like that.

Because what are we to live on
now that Father lost his job
And nobody gives the likes of us nothing
and 5 kids won't get full from one slice of bread

Being tired from so much running
I sit down on a bench and wanted
to take off again.

That man sitting next to me who
has been reading says simply,
"Aye, that's nice!".

He gave me that book then, too,
And there was so much in it
about a completely different and better life than I am used to.
Then the old man left. I remained sitting.
All at once it was dark and I was cold -
after all, I was hungry for some food
and I just thought:

"Even if I'm now in a bad way,
perhaps there'll be better times.
And then what a pity it'd be,
if I were already dead
when it finally happened".
So I went back home to Mother
she was really worried about me and only said: "Eat,
as long as there is something there".

And so everything's getting along,
what with hocking and borrowing
I'm up to my neck in the dirty stuff.
So I scrub and mend my rags.
And that piece of rope
Will not be running away.

I understand why people in adversity cry out for a leader. I understand why there has to be robbery and wars: injustice is to blame! There should neither be young girls who cannot go dancing because of sixty cents, nor poor, old fathers, who have to cry wretchedly about it.

As National Socialism was gaining ground, I had Aryan classmates who wanted to console me: he does not mean you, only the

bad Jews, the others, the eastern Jews, the dirty ones... It was not reassuring.

I have to share the responsibility for "a better time": deliverance from poverty, deliverance from class distinctions, from anti-Semitism, from a double sexual morale. (I wasn't as yet concerned about the emancipation of women. I had not as yet noticed the injustice against women! I had already fought and conquered the injustice against a small six-year-old girl.)

1931: Summer semester in Heidelberg. The castle path overlooking the Neckar River. We are in love, a student and myself. We have just recently become acquainted. A first kiss. The next morning he comes to my room - white as chalk, shaking. With some effort he confesses that his academic fraternity has threatened him with expulsion if he is seen once more with this Jewish girl!

Memory of a fragment from a poem at that time:

When you went then, I thought it had to be so.
And then I stood alone
By the door
And thought: How can one be so lonely and for what?...
Was it really only the eternal song
Of an insurmountable difference in race?

In the course of a long semester I discovered it was exactly that - through his fear-filled eyes, which looked past me, and the cold faces of his accompanying "brothers".

After the seize of power in 1933, Berlin: "Der Völkische Beobachter," "Der Stürmer" and "Der Angriff" (newspapers: "The People's Observer," "The Revolutionary" and "The Assault") are harassing. I think nobody would be punished for killing Jews on the street. On broad banners spanning the street is written plainly, "Jews, perish!" and "Nobody should hunger, nobody should freeze, but the Jews should croak!" Strange - they are not really murder-

ing anyone, although they would not be punished for it! Most people only shake their heads minutely. Inadvertently, I get caught up in the middle of a Nazi-column with our car. Brown uniforms to the right and the left. I am terribly afraid. Nothing happens.

I read Hitler's *Mein Kampf (My Struggle)*. He wants to destroy us. "Nobody eats food as hot as it is cooked," my mother says, and almost all older people say, "The scare will be over in a half year's time." I cannot convince them to flee with me. I have deduced from Hitler's book a foreboding of the grim future.

On the opposite side of the street, the sign of the lawyer, Mr. Levy, is suddenly missing. The lawyer has disappeared. "He surely has committed some crime!" says my mother. "Perhaps something to do with taxes or the like." After a few days he returns. Pale, not talking. Other men disappear, return again, nobody says anything. Now we know, even my mother - prison, violence, threats. The word "Why" disappears from my vocabulary. People are still looking for explanations! I know that explanations are not necessary. The word "torture" is mentioned for the first time.

On each Thursday in the university, at ten o'clock in the morning, a band of Nazi students bursts into the lecture hall and drags Jewish students from their seats. They do not touch women students. The well-known philosopher, Professor Nicolai Hartmann, who has interrupted his sentence, makes a movement with his hand.

The door is closed, and the professor finishes his sentence. During the break I can see Jewish students being struck in the gutter until they are bloody. I see no policemen; and if one happens to appear, they see nothing.

My friend from whom I had just separated is arrested as hostage for his famous physicist uncle. I encounter the term "hostage" for the first time, apart from history books. Compunctions about separation. Fear for my friend. I once again implore my mother and my brother to go with me to Switzerland. It is still possible. "If

you don't come along, I will go without you." "Whatever happens, will happen to me, too," says my mother and "Nothing is going to happen; it will be soon over."

Jewish businesses are to be boycotted on the first of April. On the 31st of March, my mother agrees to accompany me by rail to my place of study, Zurich, "over the Easter holidays" with the plan to return afterwards.

The train is full of fugitives. I know a newspaper editor on the train whom the Nazis are searching for. He carries a thousand marks on his person. That is forbidden; however he is afraid he cannot make it to a foreign country without money. I am afraid of what will happen with this fugitive train on the border.

A dark-complexioned man flirts from the aisle into our compartment. This small pleasure is an accomplice to my fears. Finally I get up and go to him in the aisle. He is passionate as well as moving. Whether I need something: "I would like to help you - would do anything for the young lady with the sad eyes." He opens his wallet and shows me his diplomatic passport and much money. Suddenly I have an idea. If he is a diplomat, then he could carry the thousand marks over the border! But is he really a diplomat? Or is he a Nazi spy? What would happen if I gave him the envelope with the editor's thousand marks? I go with him to another compartment and try to ascertain whether he is genuine or not. My trust in him wins out. I manage to beg the envelope with the money secretly away and give it to the diplomat. "It is a letter to me from my father. He has just died. Would you take it across for me?" The man is beaming. "Would do everything for the young lady with sad eyes - I told you so!"

Waiting in the train station at the border is an unending fear. It was superfluous. No particular control. As the train moves to the Swiss station, the diplomat gives me the envelope back with a radiant expression. (Now, while writing this, I think how beautiful it would be if he would read these lines - somewhere in the world.)

Within a month's time, smuggling over the border a matter of course for me. Each smuggled object, each Leica camera, each car tool into which gold had been cast could save lives. On my border excursions I experienced no remorse, only fear. Laws that are disgraceful to justice must be broken - for justice's sake. I learned to transgress against laws without getting into conflicts. There is discretion - and even lying - which is more valuable than following the law, if these are opposed to human rights. My interest in philosophy became stronger, my interest in theology awakened. For two years at seven o'clock in the morning in Zurich, where I was studying, I attended Emil Brunner's theological lectures. When I heard that Paul Häberlin was lecturing about the conscience in Basel, I travelled twice weekly there to hear him.

In Zurich I spent countless hours in consulates, standing in line for entry permission and passage visas for friends and others who were in danger. It was like being at a stock market for persons. Some days Cuba was being offered, on others San Domingo. Also North Africa was being dealt with. Argentina and Brazil emerged occasionally. Those who had close relatives in the United States could, after lengthy periods of waiting and with considerable luck, fall under the (German) immigration quota. Everything cost unending quantities of time and money.

There were Swiss and also national and international organisations that assisted financially and with retraining programs. However, it continued to be difficult to get valid visas. For a period of time fugitives were directed towards - or were even brought by Swiss border officials - to the French border. There were passages for the illegal immigration into France. Later these doors to freedom closed, too. Everyone knew or should have known: Whoever was sent back to Germany was lost - and this already before the Kristallnacht (burning of the synagogues) of1938.

May 1940: After the occupation of the Netherlands, a pincer-like movement of the Nazi army through Switzerland and into France

became probable. My husband and I were employed in a psychiatric clinic "Littenheid Asylum" in Thurgau. Our little Heidi was three months old. An alarm came by telephone that announced that the Germans had crossed the border. It was estimated that the army would be in our area in three-quarters of an hour. It had always been our hope that we who, despite the loss of our German citizenship because of our birth had remained in Switzerland, would be brought as "enemy aliens" to a concentration camp in central Switzerland. This in itself grotesque hope was shattered when all access roads near the border were blown up.

What could we do? My husband was sure that he would attempt to survive. The fear of being tortured was too great for me personally and in additional, because of a post-partum-polyneuritis, I was unable to move my arms and legs normally. I knew that I would kill myself. I possessed a deathly shot of morphine. But what about the baby?

In the midst of our agonising deliberation, the door opened. The administrator of the hospital, whom we hardly knew, had run the five minute's from her house to ours to offer us that they would take in our child as the illegitimate baby of their eighteen-year-old daughter. We were shaken by this humaneness. However, should we accept that offer? Wouldn't the Nazis hear from some patient or employee that this three-month-old child Heidi was Jewish? And then? Would they maul her, smash her on the rocks, bury her alive? Was not it our duty to kill her painlessly before that? We did not have to make this most horrible decision - it was a false alarm.

During that night we experienced for forty-five minutes what many persons at that time were enduring for months or years. I feel it when people are cast out to seas in bare boats, when they are forced to sell the plot of land which is their sustenance, when they could be or are expecting fire or napalm to be raining down from the heavens - be it Vietnamese, African blacks or American

browns, be it Israeli or Palestinian families. And I also do not forget that woman who, amidst her own fears, risked herself personally for the life of an almost stranger.

With this allusive description of a night during which we almost had to choose between suicide or torture and between killing our child painlessly and the possibility her being murdered cruelly, I would like to close the chain of memories, which have contributed to the development of my values. This was *the* "experience on the frontier (border)" which I feel has deeply influenced my life. The issue in humanistic psychology and applied humanistic education is the *How* in the advancement of life and love against murder and cruelty. Everything else is quite secondary.

The issue is values . . .
in hypothesising an
organic value sense

We do not decide whether we want to make value judgements or not. We feel, think, experience and make value judgements because we as human beings have been so endowed. We can judge pragmatically or idealistically, materialistically or aesthetically, tolerantly or dogmatically or use a mix of different scales in valuing. We can place more value on individualism or collectivism, or on a balance between both. We can celebrate wars and victories or reject violence. What we will never be able to do is not to make value judgements.

Are there absolute values, which are part of an innate "natural conscience?" Are they accessible to anyone's comprehension of or adherence to them? Or do values coerce us, just as animals are forced in feeding their young?

Can ethical values be experienced only through genuine religious revelation, which only an elected few can experience and transmit? Are these values absolute? Or are they the gradually acknowledged basic principles of our coexistence, which are trans-

mitted by generation to generation through parental traditions? Basic principles that sustain culture and admit innovations only slowly? Are there "inalienable values" for each level of human evolution, which are valid respectively for a certain epoch?

Any answer that would exclude all the others is sheer hubris. I feel alleviated by the fact that we are living in an age of rethinking, in which elements of uncertainty and paradox are admitted into the theories of cognition. We owe this gift above all to modern physics, because it acknowledges subjectivity in perceiving and thinking as involved in the creation of all phenomena and the interpretation of it, thereby providing support to poets, thinkers, mystics as well as affirming a new view of science, bringing the natural sciences and liberal arts together.

I do not believe that an *absolute* good and evil is revealed to an elected few. However, I do believe that an "inalienable" sense of good and evil guides us, whose direction is allied with inner and outer realities, not statically and immovably determined. The doer and the deed can be understood ethically only in their total context. Ethical values are inalienable *and* they are dependent on processes. Those who regard themselves in perspective, that is, as persons limited in cognitive abilities, know that good and evil look differently from different perspectives. I can only state *my* truth and not *yours*. However, I believe that different aspects of ethics could not exist, if they were not relevant to the reality of an inalienable centre; just as little as the legendary four blind men who felt the elephant in four different places - the trunk, an ear, a leg, the tail - would not have been able to misinterpret as they did, if this elephant had not existed! I believe that all interpretations of good and evil are relevant to an interpreted, inalienable centre; although the interpretations themselves can be misleading.

If it is correct that the world will perish should the right of the stronger not be overcome, then the question is relevant as to whether, based on our present experiences and knowledge, a

leap in the evolutionary development that would insure that a sovereign good has the necessary power to endure could occur.

There has never been a lack of evidence that humans long for justice, love and peace. There has only been a lack in the ability to satisfy this longing.

Because of the mankind's present adversity, priority must be given to the question of how loving justice can become an energetically enduring strength. My attempt at an answer is *through the hypothesis of an organic value sense*:

Human beings have an innate organic value sense, which, just as with the other senses, can be developed or can wither away. It serves the advancement of life and consciousness in an universal solidarity. Therefore, the acceptance of a qualitative higher development is unavoidable. The human being is developed more highly than a one-celled creature. The humane person more highly than the inhumane.

I have chosen to use the term "values sense" instead of a "sense of values," because the contextual core of the concept seems to be better expressed that way. My understanding of the values sense is as an organically grounded spiritual power, which has the capacity to develop, and is neither merely an early predetermined imprinting nor an indeterminate coincidence.

The idea of a values sense corresponds to the view of human beings as autonomously interdependent by nature. We are determined through dependency and bondage to fate. Our freedom to act and to decide exists within the limits of an interdependent reality.

The evolution of each of our senses, including our ethical values sense, is determined equally by the intensity of innate abilities and by the diversities of outer reality. The development of a values sense emerges from organismic sources, which are energetically filling the growing conscience, interacting with the environment and

with events. A conscience that is supported solely by verbal-rational knowledge and not by feelings speaks to us in the language of rules and prohibitions, relayed through a very differentiated network, operating, however, only on weak current.

The question of why our ability to act conscientiously has to suffer ethical atrophy is clarified with this hypothesis. As long as messages from the body and feelings - especially those of children - are minimised and boycotted, prohibitions and rules will be flourished about for centuries. And when matters get serious, they will be displaced, forgotten and/or disregarded, for a conscience that is not based in a *totality* lacks supportive capacity. Sensuousness and sense are not only related closely through language but also in how they are experienced. Their roots are physical and are yet more than physical. We need our ears *and* a spiritual internalisation of the hearing process to hear sounds as music, as well as to create music. I believe that our ethical sense is also similarly rooted in an organismic fashion. A bad conscience is experienced as a stomach ache or heaviness in the body, a good one as lightness and being borne on wings. The conscience is perceived through body sensations in the same way as horribly squeaking and screeching sounds are painful to our head and ears, while music is experienced as something pleasant. In addition, the conscience can be underdeveloped, can be seduced or damaged - that is to say, reacts in a distorted way. Excessive frustration or spoiling, violence or neglect, parental or mass suggestion can prevent the conscience from expressing its true self.

It is my opinion that the scratching of a knife on a saw is musically less valuable than songs, traditional rhythms, music for dancing or symphonies, which have survived over the centuries. And I am even more convinced that inquisitional tortures, genocide, making others despicable, etc., are more evil than loving, understanding and therapeutic help. The fact that we can be mistaken in an individual case, that we are sometimes unjust and forget the needy perpetrator or his victim in our condemnation of the evil deed, is

not contradictory to the possibility or reality of flexible organismic values and a hierarchy of values.

I think it is possible that the development of the values sense can proceed not only with evolutionary slowness, but that a transformative quantum leap can occur. If the Jewish-Christian and the humanistic ethics have been teaching the values of goodness and humaneness and smirking pessimists nonetheless have been assuring us over the millennia that human nature, which represents the right of the stronger, cannot be changed, then I would like to argue to the contrary: the fact that something has been the way it is up until today, does not mean that it will always remain that way. (There was a time when lovers or business people could not speak to their partners within seconds merely by pressing a number of buttons!) Today we are living at the beginning of an era in which everything worth knowing about an individual is on call electronically. If we no longer have to fear data banks as traitors and utilise them not *against* but *for* persons, then creative powers can be released which are needed for our coexistence as human beings. If facts, data and theories are available through pushing a button, then we are moving more closely to both possibilities - thinking on a comprehensive level and living in humane dimensions.

Are we human beings provided with the ability to discover and to establish values, just as we are with a talent for music? Is a universal values sense and its respectively corresponding ethics open to perception and development, just as our sense for music discovers music in hearing it? Are we put into the world with the gift to grasp and to form values, just as we are created to grasp and make music? Assuming this to be so, that would mean that our self-development, and along with it our solidarity with all people, plants, animals and the living earth, is actualised essentially through an orientation to ethical values, just as music at first is actualised through our orientation to tones, sounds and rhythms. Then the universe's communality would be formed with the help of

our spiritual capacities, and we would be contributing in the composition of solidarity, just as we are contributing to the composition of music; for we could not hear music without helping to create it, just as we would not see the sun if "the eye were not liable to the sun."

It may be that animals are the forebears of our ethical potential; they may have "forebode" ethics. The bird that is whistling and singing is on its way to music, the bird feeding its young on its way to ethics. And yet there exists between the two of us a difference which is more qualitative, offering us freedom and responsibility, music and ethics and leaving us with the task either of establishing community or of destroying ourselves.

There is a universal solidarity among all beings and all life. The expression for this in plants is their turning towards light, in animals their quest for food for themselves and for their young, or in the seeking of a sexual mate. We human beings, however, do not merely *exist* in it, we can and must freely *choose* an universal solidarity.

"To sin" means "to isolate" one's self or "to be isolated." Such isolation, whether experienced unconsciously or consciously, is painful and detrimental, because it is a misunderstanding of the reality of the solidarity of life. The sins of isolation have to be decreased or prevented by ethical attitudes and actions .

Advancing the development of the organismic values sense

Within recent decades we have come to regard the knowledge that our brain is divided into two hemispheres as a fact. The left half harbours rational, theoretical, and verbal abilities, the right side the intuitive, symbolic, feeling ones. It seems that our right brain hemisphere is less educated than the left. An emotionally "underexposed" conscience corresponds to the physiological-psychological hypothesis that our rational, "left-handed" culture is lacking in the basics of an emotional, energetic "right-handedness." Our

predominantly verbal-normative ethics can become a supporting strength only when connected with the sensual sides of the emotions establishing an organismic balance. Also, mind and gut feeling, just as the left and right brain hemispheres, require recognition and training in dynamic equilibrium!

In my imagination the ethical values sense is an ability, which requires practice. If we fetch this ability out of the isolation cell of the rational consciousness and want to help in its development, we have to provide and create an environment that is promoting instead of disrupting emotional rootedness. Isolation, including that of an inner-psychic nature, is sin. We sin against ourselves and against the community if we do not take our own organism in its entirety seriously, thus allowing our emotional abilities to wither.

My first impulse in posing the question of whether there is an innate holistic values sense and whether we can further its development, came from my observation of a baby, who is given a cookie and who gladly, after a short time, sticks it in the mouth of another friendly being - be it a person or an animal. Apparently, if there is give and take in such feeding, it experiences considerable delight. Children behave similarly with toys up to the age of approximately one and a half years. They gladly give things away, if they are sure to get them back again. Giving and taking toys and items of food is a joyful game for infants, similar to games like peek-a-boo when a face is hidden and appears again.

At first children appear to have no sense of property; they are happy about giving and taking in a reciprocal process. When bigger children and adults defend their property as property, they learn only slowly to distinguish between yours and mine. In their relationship to objects, toddlers behave as they behave regarding songs, which are no one's possession and which anyone can sing, either just for himself or together with others.

I do not maintain with this statement that the joy in possessing is not a primary disposition that ought to be developed. Attach-

ment to rooms, objects, clothes and toys are thoroughly constructive factors in life (which is why toys that are easily destroyed are hostile to life). However, I believe that values connected with possessing things are overemphasised in our culture, in comparison with the joy in the common use of things.

To me the intrauterine symbiosis is the symbol and breeding place for a developing I-and-We sense of community. Essential is the giving and taking. After the child is born, it is important to protect this sense, allowing it to grow without either repressing a sense for possessing things or educating away the custom of community and solidarity.

To make my point, here is a recollection of a kindergarten teacher. She suggested to the children to crawl like dogs on all four legs as quickly as possible to the other side of the room in order to see who would be first. The children were delighted with the game. As one of the boys noticed that he was crawling much more quickly ahead than the others were, he waited a moment until the others caught up. His delight in playing the role of a dog was the meaning of the game for him. The designated task - a training in rivalry - was foreign to him. The kindergarten teacher was just as moved by this as I had been while observing the toddler who stuck his cookie in another person's mouth.

Evidently children are endowed with a sense for community. We must learn to recognise this and to honour it. If we confirm and further the sense of community, instead of leading it astray with our wishes and rules, children will have a chance to gain an organismic balance. Then they might associate self-fulfilment more consciously with their embeddedness in the community, decaying neither in herd-like collectivism nor in isolationistic tendencies.

If, on the other hand, we as the elders who have grown up with rivalry suppress the beginnings of an ethical value sense in children, we reduce our hopes for a better future. It would be about the same as if we would offer a child only tin scratchers and iron

tongs at the start to make music with, thereby burdening or spoiling his sense for music.

The "birth trauma", from which so much has been derived psycho-dynamically, might be a culture phenomenon in part. Probably the real trauma is not the natural birth itself, but the medically cold reception of the child in an environment lacking empathy, with soulless, mechanised reception rites in which the baby, who is accustomed to warmth and movement, is struck on his bottom, laid on cold scales, enveloped with clothes alien to the skin, overwhelmed with noise and cold light, and kept far away from radius of the mother's wave lengths and radiation. Perhaps this alienated welcoming into the world explains in part a later longing for the womb on the one hand and for violence on the other. And perhaps a bit of hope for the possibility of developing a joy and value sense in our children can be seen in the spreading attempts to introduce "natural childbirth", which affirms life and babies alike.

Babies bring along rudimentary stages of autonomous abilities from their embryonic experiences. They move, react to various noises and prepare themselves for life on the outside. The more babies can acquaint themselves in an appropriate manner with their own breathing within their mother's arms, lying on her belly in the dimmed light of the delivery room, the less will be the pain of separation, a co-operatively achieved exit into the world of light and air, from the internal watery home which had become too narrow. The slight smile of well-being after birth gives witness to a certain basic feeling of security, which they had acquired in the uterus (in spite of a not at all so paradisical time in the womb, as the legends of an uterine paradise would lead us to believe - embryonic experiences are probably a mixture of pleasure and pain!).

The lightless symbiosis of envelopment in the mother is expanded at the time of the birth to an increasingly conscious and lucid belonging to the world. "We can not fall out of this world" is the basic feeling of a person, whose primal trust in the embeddedness

in the community has not been wounded by violence or neglect.

While our babies mostly smile for the first time at the age of five or six weeks, there appears to be a privileged few who smile directly after their birth - those upon whom a friendly reception was bestowed, without shrill light, without hanging by their feet, without the obligatory slap on their behind.

When babies strike out before they know that they can hurt others, rigor and violence will not help them to learn. Distress and anger are more likely. Violence teaches the lesson that the stronger will win.

I have to shudder while writing this. I am now conscious of how almost all of our children are deeply influenced at an early age by being yelled at, through threats, by being retained physically and, more than that, through wounding blows and disfiguring maltreatment. What we experienced with our own body goes deeper than mere words. The younger the children are, the deeper their experiences in feeling. Their own feelings of anger, crudeness and apathy are supported. Feelings of affection and security weakened.

We support the musicality of the child if we allow it to participate in our own musical interests. We support him also through our delight at his enthusiasm for tones, rhythms, songs, dance, etc. Likewise, we support the development of the ethical value sense in the child when we show reverence for his and our own life. This includes recognising and taking seriously the beginnings of impulses in the child to give and take.

In addition, the school systems of the mighty nations of the 20th century train pupils predominantly either towards an individual or a collectively material egoism. The values of technology prevail over those of the spiritual in these civilisations. Our performance-trimmed school systems can hardly regard with a friendly attentiveness the intuitive human capacities, a loving self-esteem

or empathetic conduct (although many teachers try to free themselves from this abuse of themselves and their pupils). Art and music, theatre experiences and an expansion of the social horizons are delegated at best to minor subjects - the values of beauty and goodness, therefore, treated as secondary matters.

Children in our culture no longer work in spinning mills and other production factories as at the end of the previous century, but in school factories for children, which are characterised by rivalry and uniformity. They are synchronised into a school-tact system, not unlike assembly line workers according to the time clock. They, however, have better chances to change their jobs than schoolchildren! The children are rewarded for talent, speed and industry and punished for lack of talent, slowness and indifference, whereby these wages and punishment are not always actively distributed, since the grades are frequently determined by mechanical or unjust assessments. Thus children are impaired in their autonomy, in their sense of solidarity, in their creativity, in their gaiety and values sense. They finish school, which they usually entered as active children, full of life, as objectified products, many of whom make themselves available, cynically or apathetically, for further objectification and as consumers, or protest as rebels (even terroristic ones).

There are situations of adversity for adults and for children, in which a quick blow or a turning away is more understandable and more sympathetic than pious posturing. I am thinking, for instance, of a boy in a children's home, who almost choked another boy to death and was prevented forcefully by his teacher; or of a three-year-old child, who repeatedly ran out of his yard to take a walk on a busy main street and who was finally spanked by his desperate mother. Here the important point is that the child experiences the genuine caring of the adults in his life, before an unfortunate accident occurs.

I am not in favour of an ethical perfectionism. Perfectionism leads to frustration and thus easily to violence. An angry reaction

of the adult to troublesome conduct in children, and vice versa, is sometimes more fruitful than attempts to contain gnawing vexations inside one's self, which is neither beneficial to adults nor to children. It is important to heighten the level for tolerating frustration and to avoid over-frustration - naturally both of these are not always possible.

Ever again I find it surprising how rarely children seriously hurt other children. Despite occurrences of jealousy, anger, great frustration, incidences in which babies are killed or mutilated by their siblings are very rare. I do not believe that this is due to the cautionary measures of adults alone, although these are surely often not superfluous. However, it is fortunately rarely necessary and appropriate to protect children at a playing age from the aggression of other children. In such cases my often-quoted principle is valid, "Giving too little is theft. Giving too much, however, is murder." Too little parental protection prevents, too much curtails the child's innate power. Discovering a golden mean has become extremely difficult in our times, especially in metropolitan areas. In many cities children are actually so endangered by the traffic, by criminals and by a spreading coarseness that they must be given more protection than would be corresponding to their developing independence.

Children have more difficulty bearing an under-evaluating of their pain, grief and constraints than in bearing pampering. When danger, pain or grief are denied, discounting is involved: "Now, that wasn't so bad" or "That's not hurting you so much." This twisting of reality damages the realistic values sense in its capacity to grow naturally. However, I have observed that children, who have been indulged, albeit not excessively or over long periods of time, develop social feelings and a conscience earlier than children who have been neglected, who have been lied to or who have been maltreated.

It is ten o'clock in the morning. I am lying in bed and am pleased that I have so many ideas. However, my stomach tells

me that I am anxious. Why, actually? Oh, yes, the neighbours could think that I am lazy if I am still in bed at this time of the day! That's nonsense, if that disturbs me!

A flash of memory - the greatest sin of all was to offend my mother; and if I did offend her, I was punished by my bad conscience. Therefore, it now has the fantasy that my neighbours are my mother (by transference) and that I am the child who should not offend her - and laziness does offend her! My values-feeling, which is speaking through the conscience in my stomach, is all twisted around! It is being true to a twisted rule. My stomach is saying in essence that my values sense does not belong to me, but my mother.

Wait, I am not merely my stomach! It is important to know that, too. I can contradict it. I am more than my dependent child conscience. That is relieving. I can regulate myself.

I lie in the bed and watch the birds. Regarding raising children, I have the following thoughts: "Offer your child your own values, because you have no choice anyway - aside from examining them yourself. In addition you can be attentive to the values sense of your child, which is fresh with dew, and learn from it. The advantage of being grown-up is in having a greater perspective on things. You can represent your own values and observe the values of your child at the same time, acceding to them without wanting to deny their reality. Changing requires time - your changing and his growth."

A well-developed conscience has the task to further itself and others - in the service of a sense of community: "I am I, and as such a part of We." This expression of I-am-I and the I-We-component forms the basis of an organismic values sense, not a distorted one. Distorted is when you see the red light flashing, although it's the green one's turn, and vice versa. If I am presently lying in bed and am able to work better than if I were sitting at my desk, there is nothing preventing me momentarily aside from my

distorted childhood conscience. And even if I would not now be working at all, but merely watching the birds, I would be justified in my feeling of well being. Presently my thoughts are judging more in accord with reality than my stomach.

Thoughts in passing:

• Perhaps I would have to clarify at some time the idea of rationality, that is, rationality that is organismically anchored should be called reason. Reason is the expression of a dynamic balance between mind and feeling.

• The ethical person is not determined solely by thinking and logic, not solely by sensations and feelings, but by a holistic conscience. Consciously or unconsciously inherent hereto are transpersonal and spiritual strivings.

• Ethical prescriptions do not exist. Each situation differs from another according to personalities, the circumstances of their lives and all other given factors.

• The capacity to identify values is inherent to us; specific values will be identified in the process of maturing and under the influence of others. Therefore we cannot ignore values in which children believe, rather we have to let them mature along with us in our relationship.

• "Thou shallt not kill!" This commandment was spoken, heard and believed. Whether Jehova said it, whether it came from a divine instance in human beings or from a pragmatic ethics, the belief that we should not kill cannot be entirely eradicated, despite everything to the contrary. Is it perhaps the fate of mankind to counter the innocent cruelty of the animals with a committed goodness? Are the possibilities for developing that which is good established in human beings as a values sense, which allows us to develop ourselves towards more humanitarianism? If, however, human kind has been dreaming for thousands of years of a paradise on earth, once lost but which will come again, shouldn't there

be a realisation of this dream one day, an analogue to the stories of an "Open, Sesame!" door or that of a "flying carpet", visiting the moon and many other things which mankind dreamed of in former days?

• Almost all situations involve *conflicts* which turn out to be questions of priority. Which person or which concern should have precedence at a particular moment? A dynamic hierarchy of values is never absolute, but must be seen always in relationship to the persons involved and the respective situation. The practical consequence is that it is always difficult to determine priorities and make compromises, and that each solution and decision also includes a partial frustration and the risk of a basic error.

• If the hypothesis of a values sense is correct, then there is hope that it can be furthered and developed, and we can thereby take a partial leave from our addiction to the right of the stronger and come nearer to humane values. The difficulty in establishing priorities between our own conflicting needs and the wishes of others is not thereby reduced, but it does receive more careful consideration.

• Value scales always exist within complex relationships. Priorities in values do not proceed linearly from above to below. They have many factors and facets. Often our intuition has to decide about priorities, whereas I see intuition as a shortcut, in which that which was formerly experienced, thought, felt and learned, flows into intuition. I have come to believe that the possibilities of intuition are dependent also on certain personal abilities as well as on the reception of external radiation.

• *Timing* is an essential factor in setting priorities: what can and should be said or done and when, where and in which way. Often it is better not to say something *now*, which can be appropriate *later* , and vice versa. There are no specific prescriptions, for such questions have to be decided according to the situation. The issue is assessing the risks that the deciding person is taking or

avoiding. The issue also concerns evaluating the question - is a relevant pressure involved here or am I pressuring myself?

• Tracking down the priorities in decisions concerning values has political relevance. Each individual who furthers the development of himself and his children and his environment in this way is contributing support to a more humane future (or to a future at all).

• We must find a compromise between doing and letting things be. Letting things be can also be understood as permitting meaningfulness. Being at home has the meaning in the humanistic and in the religious sense of allowing ourselves and others to be and to let go. *Being* is also in doing. *Doing* is also letting go.

• There are feelings in the conscience that lag behind the rational part of the conscience, and vice versa. Pardon yourself, if both halves of the brain, if heart and mind do not enjoy an harmonious partnership! Why should just you, a single individual, manage to achieve a quantum leap over the centuries? It is better to accept the conflict than to try to disguise it. Children accept this much more easily than your maintaining that there is no conflict and your doing everything "right." You will be credible to them, and they will learn that being honest is permissible.

• If the conscience of even those persons who are devoting themselves very consciously to the task is developing only very slowly, how long will it take until the conscience of the world changes? What hope exists at all for a humanisation of the knowledge in the world? Is perhaps "the sum of individual consciousnesses" more than their parts and might this "more" cause an evolutionary leap to a higher social and spiritual "total conscience?"

• It is superstitious to assume "that something will always be a certain way because it has always been that way." We shouldn't

become guilty of making such a negative "self-fulfilling prophecy," thereby legitimating any sort of violence. However, it would be conceivable that the belief in the possibility of an evolutionary leap could turn out to be a more useful "self-fulfilling prophecy!" We have many examples of "belief moving mountains." And our reasons for the importance and accuracy of the hypothesis of "an evolutionary spiritual quantum leap" are numerous.

Chapter 8

"I'M NOT A GURU!" INTERVIEW WITH RUTH C. COHN

INTERVIEWER: HORST HEIDBRINK

Ruth C. Cohn celebrated her 80th birthday on August 27, 1992. The following interview, which I conducted with her on July 21, 1992 for the journal "Group Dynamics" was actually much longer and comprehensive than the text which could be printed here. In agreement with her I have shortened it to a "printable" length. (H.H.)

H.H.: What do you feel was the most important impulse or the most decisive experience which led to the development of "Theme-Centered Interaction"?

R.C.: That act of courage which I consider the most essential event of my "professional," and partially of my personal life as well, was connected with my work as a teaching psychoanalyst. It came to my attention that the reason that candidates were failing at our training institute was due, in nearly 80% of the cases, to their not being able to deal with counter-transference satisfactorily. They then had to return to their own analysis in order to master this - which, of course, didn't help at all. Counter-transference and transference cannot be routed - at best they can be

reduced. There are certain things, including early impressions, which are impossible to erase completely. The institute said that these persons had to return to their own analysis - that was all. I asked, "What happens in the meantime with their patients?" "They have to wait, too," was the answer. Already at that time I was convinced that counter-transference was a quite normal phenomenon - there are even very diversified versions. Then one of the women candidates approached me and said that if the institute wouldn't provide it, she would organise eight or nine persons for a private seminar with me. That was the beginning. On the evening prior to the first session I gave considerable thought as to just how I was going to manage this, how I should be dealing with the subject "counter-transference." I had the idea that I would lie down on my own couch and let thoughts about my patients and my situation with them freely flow through my mind. I considered what I would then do when the thoughts were flowing, and nothing occurred to me except describing what was going on inside of me - in the here and now. I already believed at that time that learning is most efficient in the here and now. Then a patient came to my mind, a woman with whom I had the feeling that my own feelings were playing an important role. In the middle of freely associating in front of the group, I became aware of just which feeling it was: "She knows everything, she is so smart!" The patient was a famous chemist, who naturally knew much more about chemistry than I did, and I wasn't famous, either. Therefore, I kept quiet. An analyst is supposed to remain quiet, but I kept too quiet. It was as if I were sitting on a small stool, listening to my Papa. He knows everything, too. And the whole time they were listening, the feeling became stronger and stronger within me that they know exactly what is going on.

H.H.: The group which was sitting there?

R.C.: Yes, the group which was sitting there. This feeling became so powerful that the case I was describing disappeared and my reactions were directed solely towards the group. I don't

know how I finished. Probably: "I am now thinking only about you - and what is happening in you now?" Then they commenced talking about what they thought about the case. That wasn't restricted to what I had been saying, but was more related to the interaction among the participants. "What you just said reminds me of S.," or "I'm angry about what you said," "Yes, I thought so myself, sometimes." I was being mentioned only occasionally. Something began to become apparent to me. At first not entirely clear. During the following session we became aware of the fact that the person who is freely associating is bringing the patient into the group through her or his representation. When I am speaking about the problems I am having, I am also identifying myself through my use of language, through my choice of what I say. And the group identifies itself with the patient or with me.

Within this one year we were able to establish a tremendous amount about what was going on in the group. Somewhat later I taught group therapy and did things that no one else was doing. Realising exactly what it was that was different was slow. When all the students wanted to come to me, the other teachers became somewhat jealous. They accused me of personally attracting positive transference, which they then had to deal with and couldn't. I knew I was doing something, but didn't realise what. Very, very slowly, it became clear to me: I pay attention to myself, I pay attention to the others, I keep quiet a lot, but not too much, I always direct them back to the theme - I, We and It.

H.H.: I, We and It remind me of the Freudian distinction of Ego, Super-Ego and Id.

R.C.: One should avoid using certain terms in a different context. My "It" [Id] is naturally a totally different one than Freud's; it refers to the subject matter, whereas he regarded the Id as instinctual impulses. Originally it was formulated: I pay attention to myself, I pay attention to us and I pay attention to what we are doing, i.e., the theme. Thus the name "Theme-Centered Interaction,"

although the expression is not thoroughly adequate, because the "It" is task-oriented and interest-oriented as well as theme-oriented. Also, the idea of the Globe came somewhat later - my realisation that the environment was not limited to the immediate environment, but extends back into history and also into the future. In the course of time, the concept of the Globe became more philosophical, more comprehensive. I don't have to explain that so much any more, since everyone now knows that the globe influences us. At that time we did not pay attention to the importance of what was going on in the world.

H.H.: You have related that you developed TCI basically out of the experiences in the counter-transference workshops, without being aware of it right away, and that you became conscious of this only in the course of time. Could one say that TCI is actually a daughter of psychoanalysis?

R.C.: If there is a living creature with more than one pair of parents, then one could say that. TCI is very much influenced by psychoanalysis and also very much influenced by the historical situation of national socialism. As for the method, I couldn't say that any one thing was so strongly influential. Existentialism was known by a number of practising therapists in America, but I had no contact with them at that time. I first got in touch with these persons in 1961. In New York, where I lived, I had no contact with non-Freudians, that meant particularly the existentialists. In addition, I hardly read anything at all during this period. This was due to my personal situation. I was divorced from my husband and lived alone with two small children. Aside from that, I suffered from a chronic infection, a consequence of a ruptured appendix which had happened when I was 16 years old. At that time there were no antibiotics, no penicillin. I was not well, I had children, I had my practice and kept myself afloat with antibiotics after they appeared on the market. In spite of that, infections reoccurred, until I was rescued through macrobiotic nutrition. Two whole years I ate according to macrobiotic nutrition and afterwards the infec-

tions did not reoccur. These were the reasons why I never had time for reading nor for travelling. My education depended on what I had learned before that time. What I evolved, so to speak, was quite independent from other events in the world up until 1961. In 1960 or 1961 the American Academy of Psychotherapists (AAP) was founded - at least I attended for the first time in 1961. Everyone who had had once been a psychoanalyst or had never been one met here, persons such as Carl Rogers and Virginia Satir. Perhaps they weren't there so often, but the others - Gestalt-Fritz (Perls), the experientialists Carl Whitaker and John Warkentin, Albert Ellis, George Bach, these and others met together. The persons who are now well-known in Europe. I was attracted by the title of their first annual conference, "The Continued Growth of the Psychotherapist," and attended because of it, without knowing these persons before. It touched me considerably to discover that there were others persons interested in this subject. This first conference was even nearby New York. But the counter-transference workshop was before that, to be exact, ten years before.

H.H.: Is it really correct to say, as many already think, that TCI is a particular educational method? Or is it more than that?

R.C.: My original idea was politically motivated - it should be possible to do something to prevent national socialistic (Nazi) thinking. Of course, it is not possible to reach everyone, but at least teachers and pupils. The rudiments are very educational, but my motivation was strongly political.

H.H.: That is quite evident in the TCI axioms, which distinguish it from other directions in therapy and even other educational methods.

R.C.: Especially from psychoanalysis, which functions indeed as neutral to values. That it is impossible to remain neutral in regard to values was a revolutionary idea. I feel that more and more intensely about this over the course of years.

H.H.: You understand TCI as a holistic approach.

R.C.: Feelings, thinking and the globe belonged together from the very beginning.

H.H.: Immanuel Kant said, "Be courageous and use your own power of reasoning," and Ruth Cohn added, "Be courageous and use your own power of feeling." A further additional which you made - and I was especially aware of it when you spoke about your illness - is to listen to your own body, too.

R.C.: I really was lucky. I don't agree with the notion that there are no coincidences. But it is true that it is necessary to "grasp" the coincidences which are suited to you. Quite by accident I came to be treated for back aches by a student of Else Gindler's. Originally I had been referred to an ordinary physical therapist, who was pregnant and who in turn referred me to Gindler's student. I thus received training in awareness for my body without intending to do so and without even being interested. Actually I was interested in the woman, eleven years older than myself, who told me all sorts of things that no one else did. I kept the appointments because I liked her very much and I thought it marvellous that someone was finally telling me "real" things. But of course later all of this became a part of my own analysis.

H.H.: But it must be terribly difficult really to combine, find a balance and equilibrium among those things which we traditionally separate - feelings, thinking, body. How is it possible to integrate my body, my mind and my feelings?

R.C.: You can't do it - it's completely impossible. You can merely possess a compass! My compass is: I don't want to neglect my body nor give up my soul and I definitely want to be using my mind. You know, today things are just the opposite to what they used to be. Today, when I am working with groups, they always say, "You're not speaking from your guts, you're speaking only from your head." Then I always reply, "The head is

also a beautiful part of the body." Actually it's only the dynamic balance which is missing. The balance between head, body and spirit, between you and me, between me and us and the world, including the third world, etc. However, it is impossible to be aware of all factors at the same time - that's completely out of the question. We cannot be continually concerning ourselves with the fact that millions are now starving to death. And we possess a room wherein two persons could sleep and in the larger room perhaps even twenty. It's not true that there is not enough space. It's not true that there is not enough to eat. It is only true that the distribution is faulty. It is also true that we all share in the guilt. What am I doing, so that things will gradually improve? So, I work with TCI and attempt not to eat meat and I don't, unless I want to avoid insulting certain persons. When leading groups, I find time to talk about this. Again and again it seems that people discover, as if all by themselves, that it is possible to eat as a vegetarian. Naturally, plants have a certain right to life, too. Life lives from life. My choice is merely what I do not choose to eat - I can't eat inorganic matter. I am convinced that everything is living. But I'm also convinced that levels of consciousness and the capacity to feel pain varies considerably. Stepping on an ant accidentally while I am walking along or killing mosquitoes purposefully so that they won't bite me are not problematical compared to killing a dog.

H.H.: You have a very comprehensive understanding of responsibility and accountability.

R.C.: Yes, of wholeness. This wholeness does not just refer to an individual, but to the individual in the universe.

H.H.: Could one say that TCI is an attempt to get people not to assume responsibility merely for themselves, but also for others - in ever widening concentric circles, from I to We to the Globe?

R.C.: No, not for others. I am only responsible for my part, not for the others. As a teacher, for example, my responsibility

can consist in increasing the children's awareness, so that they are less cruel. As a teacher of mathematics - I'm presently writing a book about TCI didactics - it might be my contribution to learn about TCI. My message to teachers today is, "Don't be a special subject's idiot." Children have to understand that, aside from mathematics, there exists the possibility that they and their parents will be killed and the world destroyed. God knows, you don't always have to be preaching that, or else they won't want to learn math or even ecology. You have to be aware of it yourself. Then you will be able to relate it to the children occasionally.

That is the step forward which I see in Jesus' teaching and a step backwards since it was recognised - and that is perhaps a step forward, too, because Jesus was wiser than I am - that human beings learn better when they have a human model, that they are better able to yield to Jehova if there is a human model. I have never heard that Jesus said of himself that he was different from other human beings - he just represented godliness more. Human beings - I'm afraid to express this - wanted to make him into a god and have the capacity, however, to make him into a demagogue. TCI does not reject the religious element. Nowadays anyone can dare to say that they are religious: Just 25 years ago that was quite different. I am ashamed to say now that at that time in New York I didn't speak with my patients about God. No one spoke about God. You spoke about the girl friend, about work - God, that was something for uneducated people. And now, everyone! I had always been pondering. By the way, have you seen my book of poetry?

H.H.: Yes.

R.C.: God always played quite a significant role, even in the early poems. I always spoke about God, even though I didn't believe in Him any more, but I found no adequate expression.

H.H.: Trees also played a large role in your poetry!

R.C.: Dorothee Sölle emphasised that but I didn't think so.

H.H.: Isn't that correct?

R.C.: After I read it through again, yes! A tree - it might be a rose, too, or anything which expresses life for us - is a religious symbol. The biblical legend of God giving his breath to another creature has at least a symbolic meaning. Human beings really possess something, which animals have at best on a much lower level of consciousness, so that we don't call it spirit, but instinct. We speak patronisingly about how the cat nurses her kittens so nicely, because otherwise her teats would ache - women have similar experiences when they first begin to nurse. But in the latter case, love is important, and I'm uncertain as to what extent cats experience this emotion. If I am the source of nutrition for my child, then there is this tremendous feeling of love, except - as, for example, in my poem "Mother" - I am no longer able to be experiencing on a holistic basis. If you are ill and don't have enough money and you have children, then love is a difficult thing. It's still there, but it is difficult to feel it and to feel it again and again. I cannot imagine that the mothers who bear their children in the desert, one after the other, that they are always capable of maintaining their love and that they gradually would be glad if there was one fewer.

H.H.: That reminds me of Maslow's pyramid of needs - that certain basic needs have to be satisfied first.

R.C.: First something to eat, then morality.

H.H.: Yes, exactly

R.C.: My views are somewhat different than his. I wouldn't put it in quite that way, but still it is true. Just as all symbols, it is true, too.

H.H.: And if we take a term of Maslow's, for example, self-fulfilment..

R.C.: I changed that for my own institute - it's not called self-fulfilment, but the development of the personality. If I absolutely

had to give a seminar such as that . . . then I would call it "Myself and Others." You can't fulfil yourself without other people - that's impossible. I described that in my book, "The Issue is Compassion." It's about both, about compassion and about being a part of the whole, whereas it's not necessary to mention being a part of the whole in the title. I am a part of society, part of the universe and I am compassionate with them and this compassion is partially biological in origin and what we have is partially, even if a small portion, autonomous.

In addition, I would say: It is a matter of fact that everything keeps on developing. And I would like to relate an example concerning family therapy . At the time I arrived in New York, I was told by the chairperson of the New York Psychoanalytic Institute's review committee that I was not allowed to practice therapy or conduct analyses, because a law was drafted and would be in effect within six years, according to which all psychologists would be thrown out.

H.H.: Psychotherapy was seen as the sole domain for medical doctors.

R.C.: Yes. Then I asked: what would you do if that was all you had learned and that you liked doing it and also did it well, and then I was told that I should work with children, using analytic methods - "that might fall within education." The training which I received in Early Childhood Education at the Bankstreet School influenced me considerably more than anything else from psychology. They were radical in their respect and regard for children. Missing, however - just between us - was the respect for the teacher. But I learned a tremendous amount about children and child development. Since the founders of this school had at least read quite a bit about psychoanalysis, my idea that one should be able to work therapeutically with children was strengthened at that time . An interesting fact was that they were all women - there was an occasional male teacher, but my training teachers were all women.

I learned a tremendous amount there and, most of all, I developed a completely different feeling for children. In my therapeutic work with the children, I noticed immediately that there were problems with the parents, if they didn't understand what was going on. Even if I only saw them once a month and also promised the child, "I am not telling your parents about what is going on here. And you don't have too, either." That is an anti-therapeutic element. Everybody who worked with children must have noticed that it is necessary to work with the family. By working with the family, the circle is opened - to the relatives, to the community, to the society.

H.H.: You mentioned other persons who also founded psychotherapeutic schools. Connected with this, I would like to ask you a question I've had in mind for a long time. Last year I attended a public presentation of your volume of poetry and something occurred which seemed remarkable to me. There were a number of comments from those attending and I remember especially two women who were quite effusive in their expressions to you.

R.C.: Yes, guru, guru!

H.H.: My impression was that you staved them off in a friendly but firm fashion.

R.C.: Yes, I reject the title of "guru," I don't care for it. At the time I began with TCI in New York, I did something very sensible. Norman Liberman, one of the co-founders, told me about it later, otherwise I wouldn't have remembered. I had been working on a particular issue and nothing else for several months - I went up in the mountains for a while in order to find out what it was that I was doing that attracted the students so much. I had taught before, but without this effect. What was I doing now which was do different? And then the symbol, the triangle, occurred to me, originally in the form of an equilateral pyramid. Then I changed that to a triangle, because of silly considerations - "rational thoughts." Yes, and then I went to my supervision group and cried out, "Now I

have it - now we can teach it!" When we founded the institute, I continually had the thought that they were doing it to please me - that they were interested in the content, but not in an institute. I had no idea whether the institute had a chance. Then I discussed with them: very well, I will assume the costs (I never dreamed of income) for the first year, and I'll take care of administration, but then we have to discuss the whole thing. At the end of the first year, we met to consider these issues and I asked, "Who will now be assuming what?" No one replied and I went to the bathroom - I always do that when I have to cry - and thought to myself, "Do I want this or not? - Yes, I do - anyway I started the whole thing! Now I have to keep on going!" Some persons who came in the third year thought, "She wants to do everything herself." I can't tell you how happy I was to hear that. From that moment on we were able to establish something resembling a democratic basis. But it still remained - my voice was the most important one.

After I began working in Europe, I didn't mention the organisation WILL for the first year and a half - I just conducted workshops and observed what was happening. That was with persons who were interested in group therapy, not TCI. Then I noticed that if there was no institute, then first of all, my ideas, which I wanted to spread, would get lost and, secondly, I couldn't and wouldn't want to be here very often. I was commuting back and forth between America and Europe at that time, and I happened to mention WILL. I was sitting with Anita Ockel, one of the earliest graduates, on a hotel balcony in Arosa, and I began telling her about how everything had happened in New York. What I had done, what we had done, how things developed slowly, which courses were necessary, etc. That was my entire organisational activity. I have not actively influenced the organisation, except through my writings and letters. I had the idea, but I never served on a committee, except during the first year in connection with the first graduates. But that was all I contributed - I was not active later in the organisation. In my opinion, that was very good.

When I die, the organisation will continue as before. Just as good or just as bad. And although I think it has many poor aspects.

H.H.: In the organisation?

R.C.: In the organisation. The difficulty of balancing between rigidity and chaos, which would I also experience, is something I would solve in a different way. I sometimes think it could be done in a different manner. But what would it be like if the training were not so rigid, then there might be even more chaos. I didn't get mixed up in these matters. From the very beginning, I was never a member of the organisation - I was "ex officio," so to speak. And as "ex officio," it is possible to have a spiritual influence. But I was never actively a part of it. And now I am hoping that it will continue.

H.H.: The classical example is, of course, Freud himself. The way he acted.

R.C.: He threw everyone out.

H.H.: Yes, he intervened in the organisation continually and always tried to maintain control.

R.C.: I consider it a mistake if the founder of an idea or a method remains the primary father or mother for too long. Mankind's longing for a primeval mother or father is so tremendous that it cannot be avoided. When I was studying with Pearls, I made the mistake of writing in some connection that I was "a student of Fritz Pearls." Of course, I meant "of Gestalt therapy." And many persons thought he had too strong an influence on TCI. That is not the case - only insofar as I myself have been changed through Gestalt. For instance, I made a negative mistake - I used to say, "speak for yourself," and then he said, "speak per I." Then I thought that that was much better, that people know what they should be doing. Slowly I noticed that this was not an improvement, but it couldn't be changed back. . . For Freud the term psychosynthesis was impossible, so it stayed psychoanalysis. And

I can't change the fact that Theme-Centered Interaction is questionable.

H.H.: You mean the name?

R.C.: Yes. All the names are false: psychoanalysis is psychosynthesis, individual psychology is social. Isn't that funny? All the names are totally crazy. The individual psychologist Adler was interested in society, the psychoanalyst Freud was interested in the unconscious and psychosynthesis and for Jung it was similar. WILL is good, above all because it is the same in German and English: "Workshop Institute for Living Learning." And that is a good name. It fits because it's educational - I want to be influential in the education of children and adults. There's no doubt about that. Because only then will I be able to influence politics. And together that effects the individual. That is my wish, that is the compass. I call it my "one-minibillionth part," which I would like to realise.

H.H.: Did you anticipate the success of TCI at the beginning?

R.C.: No, the success is much greater than I thought. Especially in Europe. I left America too soon - I realised that, too. TCI was not yet established. It is still, if at all, in an embryonic stage. Mainly because of the organisation, which I took care of by myself until I left. Some people joined later, but they were not proficient enough. I had to make a decision, since I couldn't do everything. I closed my private practice in America and reduced my travelling to America. It was impossible for me to be doing more than one thing at a time. In the last few years I have been practising privately again and doing less in TCI training. Now I'm uncertain that I will be doing anything else except public relations for TCI.

H.H.: But you have been working recently?

R.C.: I have some private patients. I worked together with the Ecole d'Humanité and I am still working with them. In a reduced

way I am continuing the same work, with my compass set for slowly changing over into public relations for TCI. Yes, but even more than that - what can I offer to the existing organisations which have been established all over the world for the preservation of the planet, what can I contribute personally and through my influence. Yes, influence, but not in the sense of a gura, but in the sense of the method and in sense of the possibility of the individual. Without teaching the method myself - others do that much better. I can't do that any more. Except at the Ecole, because I live there. But not really even there; because the teachers who have been there a long time do the majority of that teaching themselves. I provide the supervision.

H.H.: I read in your volume of poetry something about a situation which occurred while you were in Switzerland and there was a false alarm announcing that the Germans had crossed the border. Yesterday there were pictures in television of refugees from Bosnia-Herzegovina, most of them women and children who had been retained for 24 hours at the border. No one was willing to let them in. Don't events like this reawaken terrible memories for you and the feeling that actually very little has changed since then?

R.C.: As far as our planet is concerned, nothing has changed. My friend, Alfred Farau, always maintained that Hitler had won. In this regard he was the pessimist and I was the optimist. I contested that and said it wasn't so. He was continually bringing further proof - they're doing this there and that somewhere else . . . Considering what sort of torture and idiocy exists today, I feel there has been an increase. Now ecology has joined in and made the torture of nature visible, which no one had considered at that time. That will probably continue to increase in intensity for a while. However, when I say "probably," then I'm merely a frog thrashing about in the cream. If I were alone, I would give up, but since I am one of millions who want to keep on going, I can be hopeful. I don't mean just TCI, but humanistic possibility inherent

in many methods. I believe that the best "method" is connected with religion. I believe that there is something "good" in human beings. However you choose to define "good," it consists essentially in respecting life, respecting nature, respecting human beings. Then it is called "religious." And I believe that this method, this constructed method, is a systemising of that which we always knew in a way appropriate to our day and age. I hold it for a possibility that this method which is presently appropriate, will no longer be so in 50 years. One per cent hope is justified, as long as there are human beings who have not been worsened through gene manipulation. I would say that I have five per cent hope, in furthering the world rather than destroying it.

Part III

ASPECTS AND ISSUES

Chapter 9

PHASES IN GROUP WORK:
HOW THEY AFFECT THE PLANNING AND LEADING OF GROUPS

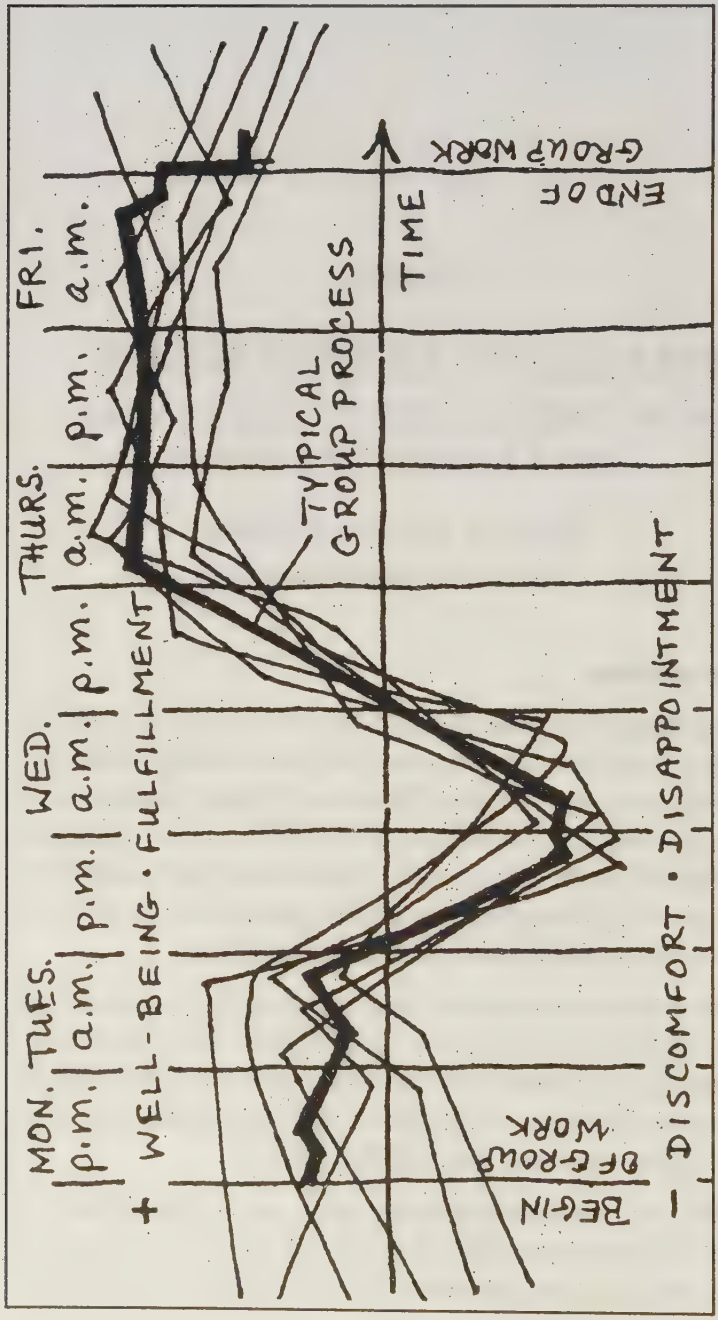
Michael Braune-Krickau
Barbara Langmaack

a) Introduction

This chapter describes observations and findings in connection with developmental processes in learning and working groups, provided they stay together for a fair amount of time. Groups, which meet only briefly, will most likely not exhibit certain of these developmental features. The results of this study can be applied to working and project groups in corporate environments as well as adult education and all school and training settings.

Just as every individual experiences his own development or has his own history, groups, too, develop their own "life history": The theme, situation and environment involved but especially the personalities of group members and the group leader ensure that no two group processes can ever be identical.

Even though this makes every group unique, the phases of a group's development will make it similar to many other groups, so that certain regular patterns can be recognised in any group's


MON. TUES. WED. THURS. FRI.
p.m. a.m. p.m. a.m. p.m. a.m. p.m. a.m. p.m. a.m.
+ WELL-BEING · FULFILLMENT
- DISCOMFORT · DISAPPOINTMENT
TYPICAL GROUP PROCESS
TIME
BEGIN OF GROUP WORK
END OF GROUP WORK

Graphic 1: Group mood curve

development. Knowing about these development phases is helpful when planning, accompanying as well as evaluating a group process, as long as these regular patterns are not misunderstood to be a fixed timetable. If a group gets stuck, if "the going gets rough," if you are uncertain as to why a group is acting in a given way, having a look at its development so far in connection with the phase model will give you valuable indications which should help clear up the situation. Naturally, phase development is only *one* of many elements that influence the group process.

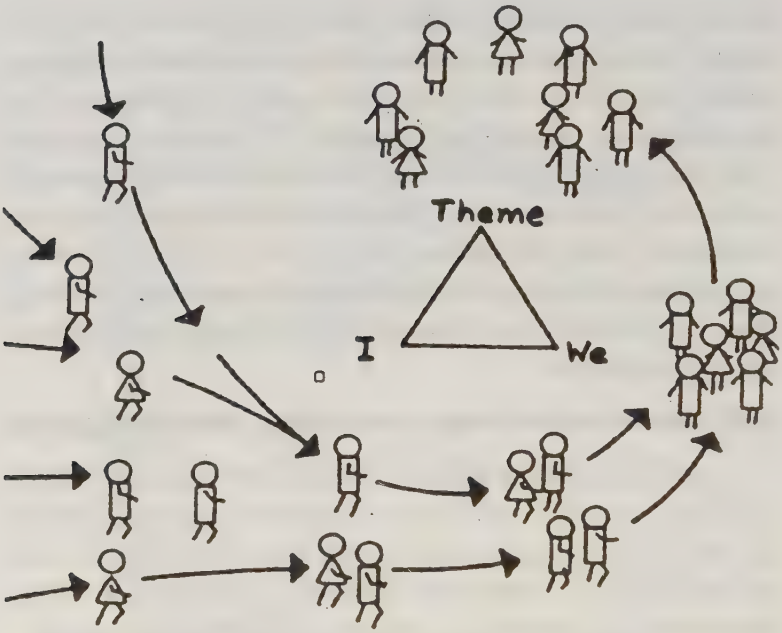
Individual I's on their way to becoming a functioning group

A new group never starts out as a group which is a genuine "WE," but rather it develops over a shorter or longer period of time from being a number of individual persons (the individual I's) - via initial contacts among each other, followed by encounters in smaller, alternating sub-groups - into a WE, a structure to which the participants feel emotionally attached.

Only a WE-feeling will allow participants not only to hear the concerns of others but also to relate to them, to recognise common points and differences alike and to accept them. It then becomes easier to reach decisions as to what the group would like to achieve as a group and how it can be accomplished. This underlines the fact that a group cannot work exclusively on its specific theme from the very outset. The group leader's first job is to help the group create this WE-feeling.

This development within the group can be demonstrated as follows using the Theme-Centered Interaction, (TCI) balance triangle:

In order to become a functioning group, a given number of persons require mutual concerns and goals, as well as the convic-



Graphic 2: Individual I's becoming a functioning group

tion that these can better be reached together than individually. A true group can only be created when the individual members need each other to a certain extent, and accept this necessity in order to achieve their goals.

For a group to get this far, it will need to *agree on the goals* that it wishes to achieve. In order to agree on common goals, an individual has to be in a position to *absorb and exchange* a great deal of *information* – about the needs and motives of the other members and the environment, about their means and skills, about working strategies and methods, etc. However, in order to be able to and want to absorb information, a group atmosphere must first be created that is defined by *acceptance and trust*. This means putting our trust in others as well as ourselves.

This interaction among

- acceptance and trust,
- absorbing and processing information,
- defining goals and making decisions,
- getting organised in order to work together

is repeated time and again during the development of a group, its rotational movement similar to that of a spiral.

This little model is helpful for group leaders when analysing difficulties within the group. Is the group not making headway

- because there is not enough trust yet,
- due to a lack of information,
- because goals are unclear or incorrect or
- work to be accomplished has not been well organised?

Goals that have been agreed upon too hastily, for example, or without regard for the trust and information necessary for such agreement, are usually not realistic. When participants are called upon to go after them, they will be forced to admit that they cannot summon the energy necessary.

The Thematic and Psychosocial Levels

In the course of its development, every group will need to work on to two problem levels, if it wishes to successfully solve its thematic concern and continue to exist as a group: the *thematic* and the *psychosocial level*. The thematic level refers to all the reasons why the group has been formed "in the first place". Examples are working on a specific curriculum, developing the solution to a problem or furthering the personal growth of the members of the group.

The group always needs to keep an eye on the *thematic* and *psychosocial levels*. In other words, it must enhance social competence alongside thematic competence. Social competence is the ability to see processes on the interpersonal level, assess their repercussions and influence them.

On the thematic level, procedures and methods for solving the thematic concern or problem are developed or selected and a suitable division and organisation of tasks to be dealt with is settled on. Examples of thematic concerns are studying an assignment, solving a conflict, changing certain forms of behaviour or creating a new form of organisation.

Defining a thematic problem and especially solving it is only possible when a certain amount of trust has been established. Usually pinpointing a problem also means pointing to certain persons who may feel hurt, threatened or criticised. Feeling trust and security on the relational level are important prerequisites for thematic work.

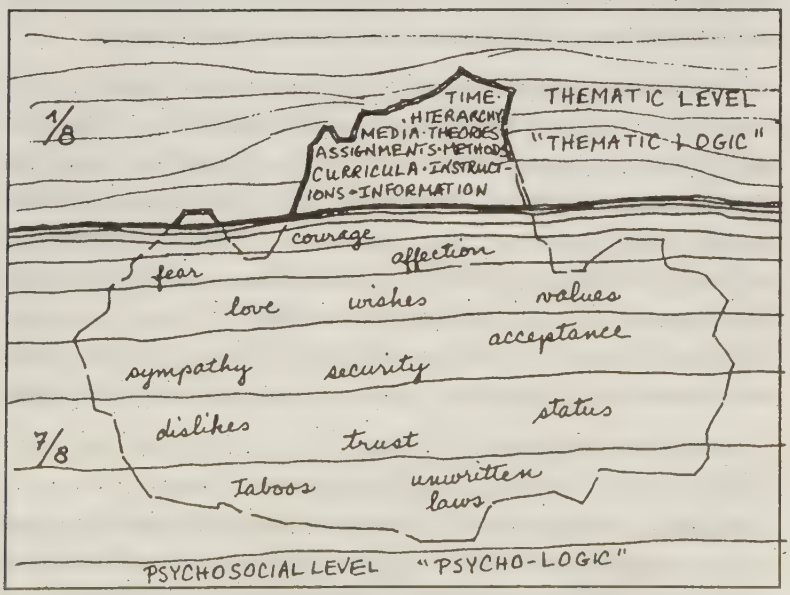
Furthermore, a group will always need to establish standards and rules for living and working together which apply within its social "inner life". It will have to be able to consciously deal with various statuses, roles, skills and experiences, since neither strict egalitarianism nor a rigid hierarchy will allow a group to grow. Courage and fear, affection and dislike are further elements, which, besides the aforementioned aspects, have a bearing on what happens on a group's *psychosocial level.*

Both levels are *interconnected* in a fashion that can lead the group into phases of conflicts and tensions. For instance, certain participants may want to push ahead on the thematic level. For many this is the more familiar level on which they feel safer. They will tend to stress this level, even if they do so at the expense of the psychosocial level. So, when some participants want to "get down to work", others are not yet able to, since they are still blocked and insecure on the psychosocial level, i.e. by a lack of trust which makes it impossible for them to openly discuss "the theme". If this is then compounded by deadlines, instructions from superiors or unfamiliar working methods, tension within a group becomes inevitable.

The connection between the two levels can be demonstrated by comparing the structure to an iceberg. Only about one seventh of an iceberg is visible. The larger part is hidden beneath the wa-

ter's surface, which makes it seem fairly harmless. If you apply this metaphor to groups, then the visible part is the thematic level, whereas everything else – as difficult to perceive and determine as in the case of an iceberg – is a set of social and emotional factors, which remain hidden.

How large this part actually is, and when the danger of a clash may be imminent, can only be perceived by a good sense for and knowledge of psychological and social processes. You can only reach the thematic level by navigating carefully and using smaller boats (i.e. smaller steps) when necessary in order to avoid running dry in the emotional area. However, if parts of the iceberg break off under water – for example, as a result of members leaving the group – then the upper part will also become unsteady and may end up sinking. The healthier a group's psychosocial level, the more it satisfies the needs of its individual members, the more a group will be able to achieve on the thematic level, especially in terms of quality.



Graphic 3: Thematic and Psychosocial Levels

Clearly the iceberg metaphor is flawed: its lower part also includes all the sources of energy which enhance work on the thematic level, such as motivation, curiosity, pleasure in doing, creativity, etc. The iceberg can often turn into a volcano, when energy in its "belly" is suppressed for too long and violated continuously. Then all that is necessary to cause an eruption is a single additional spark – and this will obviously also " break the ice".

The psychosocial level is also the most significant source for meeting the individual emotional needs of participants and of the group leader. It is a source of recognition, satisfaction, contacts, security and solidarity.

Naturally the theme, task and activity at hand can also be intellectually attractive and thus keep individuals in a group. But this attractiveness will also have a reference point on the emotional level: for example, pride in one's own skills or pleasure in participating in an important task. Processes on the psychosocial level are the main determiners as to whether or not individuals are willing to contribute, participate actively and support change.

The table on the following page reiterates what these two levels refer to. On the left is the process of *thematic-logic* problem solving, as it is often carried out. On the right are the factors in psycho-logic processes that influence the psychosocial level. This is not a list of successive steps, but rather a group of elements, which individually and collectively have a bearing on the outcome of a thematic problem-solving process. Both levels are separated from each other by something that might be compared to a fine membrane, which transfers vibrations from one level to the other.

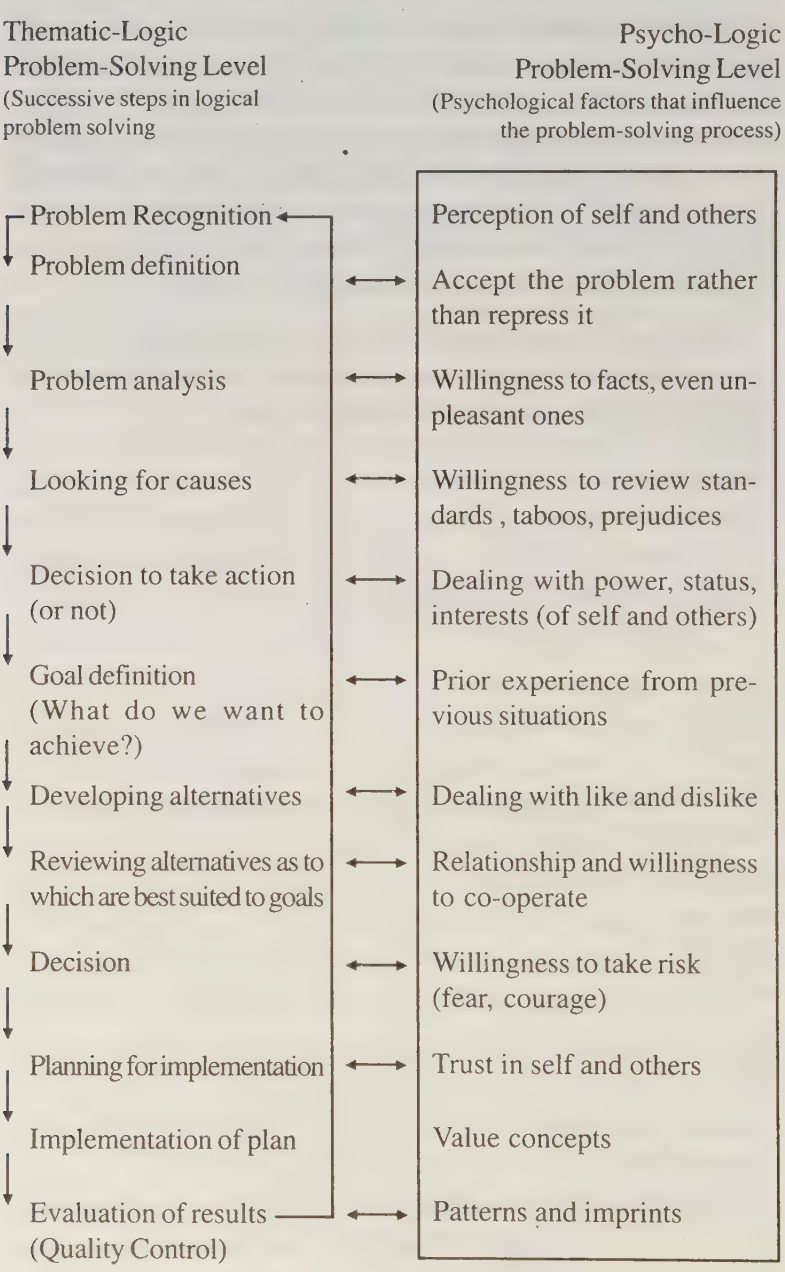
Both levels influence each other. You can suppress the social level, but never do away with it altogether. Thematic and social competence will mature when what was done and what happened is later evaluated on both levels. This double process of continual learning and development process is intricately linked to the material and findings gleaned from practical experience.

How can group leaders apply this?

Both levels must be made to strike a dynamic balance. Dynamic means that a balance can only be struck for a transitional period of time and must therefore be renewed time and again. This is true if only because both levels satisfy individual needs and because these needs change. A group may be fascinated by a task and take pride in the results of its work, but the next moment relations to others may take up most of its energy. A status quo on the thematic or psychosocial level will never prove satisfying for long.

When the common theme has been dealt with exhaustively, however, even the best possible group atmosphere is of no help anymore: the group either needs a new theme or is over.

Thematic Level and Social Level


Thematic-Logic
Problem-Solving Level
(Successive steps in logical problem solving
Psycho-Logic
Problem-Solving Level
(Psychological factors that influence the problem-solving process)
Problem Recognition
Problem definition
Problem analysis
Looking for causes
Decision to take action (or not)
Goal definition (What do we want to achieve?)
Developing alternatives
Reviewing alternatives as to which are best suited to goals
Decision
Planning for implementation
Implementation of plan
Evaluation of results (Quality Control)
Perception of self and others
Accept the problem rather than repress it
Willingness to facts, even unpleasant ones
Willingness to review standards , taboos, prejudices
Dealing with power, status, interests (of self and others)
Prior experience from previous situations
Dealing with like and dislike
Relationship and willingness to co-operate
Willingness to take risk (fear, courage)
Trust in self and others
Value concepts
Patterns and imprints

·The group and its members must develop thematic and social competence in order to achieve their goals. The group leader represents both levels.

Evaluation of the group's work should therefore refer to working *methods* and *results*: Did we achieve what we wanted and how did we experience the process which lead to this result? Which lessons can be learned from this by the group and its members for the improvement of their thematic and social competence?

Most people need to make up for lost time as far as acquiring social competence and learning to deal with problems on the socio-psychological level is concerned, since this level is usually neglected in most conventional learning and working processes.

The socio-psychological level is where our value concepts as well as many acquired patterns are stored, which can be activated quickly and unintentionally by external factors. Despite all their experience with groups and psychological training, even "old hands" will tend to immediately revert to these patterns when an issue gets too "hot" for them.

Formulating the theme to include the personal factors of professional/every-day life will show respect for this real situation. Themes of this sort make it possible to include practical experiences, which an individual may have made outside as well as within the group. Just as important are themes, which allow a regular reflection on the group process and learning environment, in order to enable the group to learn on this level. The structures within which a specific theme is conveyed should allow for as much independent activity as possible and encourage members to experience things for themselves, which can then again be put into relationship to both levels.

Group Phases

And now the individual phases themselves. In keeping with what the literature in our field has to suggest (cf. e.g. C.Antons, K.Vopel, J.Schaffer/D.Galinsky, W.R.Bion) we will divide the group development process into four phases, i.e.:

Phase 1: Arriving – Breaking the Ice – Getting one's Bearings
Phase 2: Maturing and Clarifying
Phase 3: Work Satisfaction and Productivity
Phase 4: Withdrawal and Transfer

We would like to concentrate on a few issues in this paper that are particularly relevant for planning and leading groups in practice:

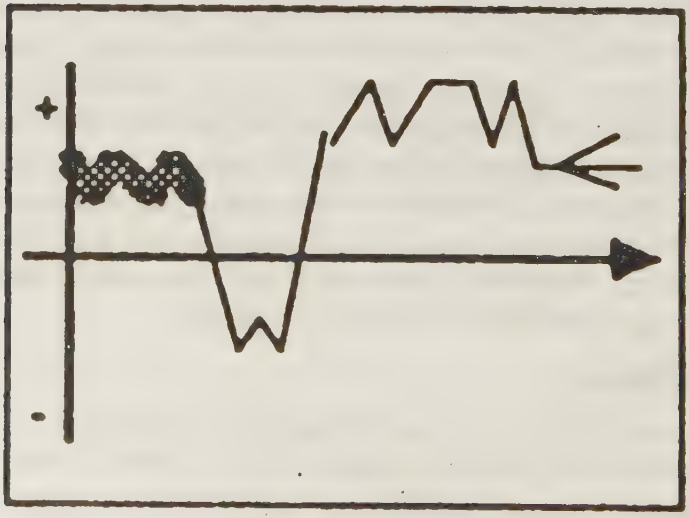
-What characterises the individual phases, which features are these?

-Which are the specific needs and wishes of participants regarding each phase?

-Which types of themes are appropriate for a given phase?

-Which themes (often not recognised) might be lurking in the background in a particular phase?

-Which difficulties may arise?



Phase 1: Arriving – Breaking the Ice – Getting one's Bearings

Strictly speaking there is a period before this first phase, during which the leader and participants alike deal with the upcoming group more or less intensively, either through preparation or by selecting the seminar and signing up for it.

Now that they have arrived, they have just put behind them the phase of saying good-bye at home or detaching themselves from their workplace, where they may have left behind unfinished assignments or dissatisfied colleagues, who will be taking on part of their workload – or they are simply still preoccupied with other things. The impressions of these "preliminaries" are still present and are thus part of the initial group process.

This is characterised by a dichotomy - having just arrived, the participants find their feelings fluctuating between poles such as

- Keeping one's distance and coming closer
- Wishing to remain anonymous and showing who one is
- Requiring direction and wanting to avoid becoming dependent
- Trying new things and not being able to relinquish what is familiar
- Wanting to be unique but then again not (too) different

This phase is also characterised by a wait-and-see attitude: let's see what happens. In order to make the new situation easier and clearer for themselves, the first thing participants do is to secretly apply labels to the others so that they will easily fit a familiar pattern: nice, strange, intellectual, dork, charmer, pal. These labels may make things seem a little clearer for one's own purposes, but they also make it difficult to approach others with an open mind. The common denominator behind this apprehensive behaviour is called insecurity and the desire for guidance:

Who are the others, what do they want?

What are the rules here? Who is allowed to do what? What may I do?

What will be possible, which goals are valid?

Will I get what I need?

As long as members of the group are not sure of the answers and their opinion of these, as long as they do not feel that their personality is independent and a part of the group alike, they will behave differently than normal. They will speak too much, too loudly – or not at all. They fall back on "party-talk," which has the important function of facilitating non-committal contact and self-projection.

Even if they go about it in different ways, all participants will be trying to define their own place and role within the group. They all wish to achieve more or less the same thing, i.e. being accepted as they are, without having to change right away. Each would like his values and opinions to be respected and simply be allowed to "belong," no strings attached, either actively or from a distance.

We've all had to deal with leaders before, in other groups as well as at home and at school. Thus we quickly and often unconsciously fall back on our familiar games: wanting to be our mother's or our father's favourite child or the little sister who summons her big brother when she is in danger. There are a vast variety of games like this. During these initial moments they are enhanced by the phenomena of transference and projection.

Aside from prior experience with other people, other groups and other group leaders, everyone brings along other pieces of baggage to the seminar which they need to discard: the aforementioned farewell at home, reservations about the seminar, sometimes involuntary participation, pressure to be a success, not being clear about one's own goals for the days ahead.

These few aspects are often at the heart of many issues which it is too early to pinpoint at this stage. The group leader

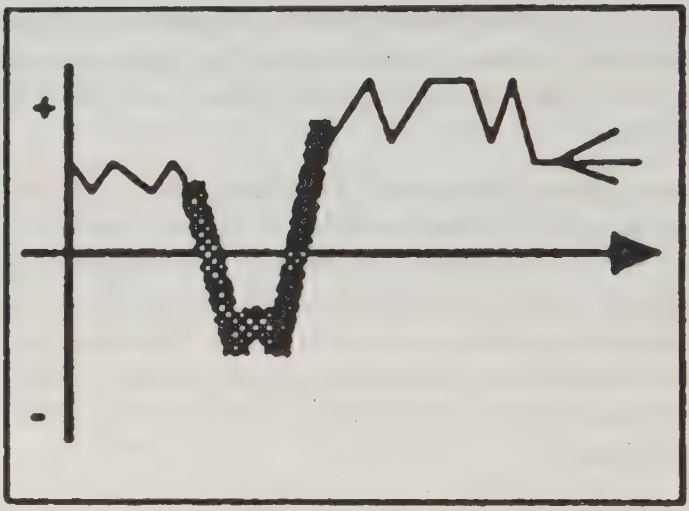
should accommodate them by offering to introduce appropriate themes that enhance opportunities for information and guidance, thereby facilitating clarification for the individuals concerned.

Even more so than during other phases, clear, recognisable structures provide a framework for the themes to be dealt with. Participants are grateful for any support that is designed to help overcome insecurity and doubt and build self-confidence. An accepting environment is a prerequisite for this. This means encouragement, not pressure, information, not interrogation, making contact without rushing into things and confrontation, not condemnation.

In this phase the group leader is still imagined to be strong and powerful, and in fact this is the way participants would like it to be. A leader is supposed to direct and offer guidance. From the participants' point of view he holds the keys to opening up an uncomfortable situation of insecurity and allowing the group to get down to work. The group feels dependent on the leader and his skills (which initially the group often assumes he solely possesses) and indeed it is, at least partially. The leader is expected to define goals and say how the group can achieve them.

He is burdened with the responsibility for the group's ability to work. His authority is not – not yet – questioned, at least not openly. He can use this authority in careful doses, offering "stirrups" to help participants over hurdles encountered at the outset. It remains his goal, however, to reduce the group's dependence on his authority and improve its capacity for self-guidance.

By not simply making decisions for the group but rather making sure the ball is squarely in the group's court as far as taking responsibility for its own learning goals is concerned, he enhances this process and at the same time encourages the group to become independent. At this point a second, new phase is discernible.



Phase 2: Maturing and clarifying

As soon as the participants have become more confident and see each other more clearly, they will show more of their true selves, their true "I." The new environment and the other participants are no longer so unknown. The whole situation has become somehow more "normal" and consequently the individual participant's behaviour, too. It is no longer necessary to be so careful when approaching the others. Sceptical and confrontational questions which may have been held back during the first phase can now be voiced.

Now individuals will want to express their own interests more clearly. This also demonstrates more visibly what the differences between the interests and expectations of the participants are, although we do not yet know how the group will manage to deal with them. Rules for decision-making have not yet been put to the test; bridges have not yet been built.

This is a source of insecurity, but at the same time it strengthens the desire to assert oneself. Rivalry and assertiveness, distribution of roles and status and/or asserting roles and status within the group influence the atmosphere and are issues that arise from the psy-

chosocial level. However, they are often dealt with on the thematic level. An example of this are decisions for which the group spends more time than actually necessary arguing about the "correct" procedure or whether information and definitions are "correct" and though all of this may sound quite matter-of-fact, what is really behind it is assertiveness, defensiveness, status protection, rivalry, and so on.

Quite naturally these issues are more intense in groups whose members come from the same organisation, and who are meant to use the seminar as an opportunity to deal with existing problems at work which concern them personally. The same is true of groups that have main themes such as experiencing dynamic group processes or conflict resolution. In these cases, personal involvement and thus the fear of being hurt or doubted is greater.

In any case, it is now all right to express more aggression, even concerning the group leader, who especially will blame for the group's slow progress by participants accustomed to authority.

Part of the aggression against the group leader or the way he is proceeding is due to the fact that he is not in line with conventional expectations concerning teachers' authority. In our case concept, a group leader sees himself as a learning assistant, not as someone who gives examples and provides instructions. He offers the group support as to how to discuss a problem and deal with it. But he does not decide what is right or wrong and does not solve a problem on behalf of the group or an individual.

This forces participants to struggle with themselves, others and the problem. In the end this is only one possible solution, even if it is uncomfortable and tedious at first, since it creates insecurity and gnaws at value concepts and familiar patterns of behaviour. Participants need to take a good look at themselves, and they often avoid doing so by making the group leader responsible for their lack of learning. The group leader should be making decisions and instructing the group which direction to

take. But woe betide him, if he actually dares to! He will immediately be up against another dimension of the participants' personality, the part that is building and protecting their autonomy and independence.

The leader's professional and psychosocial skills will be put under intense scrutiny and compared to the way one would have handled the situation oneself. A number of "testing questions" is in the air: How skilled is this leader really? How does he assert himself? How far ahead is he? How secure is he? How do I like his personal and professional style? Can't I convince him to take over or at least to spare me some of the discomfort of analysing myself?

If a leader sticks to his goal of enhancing the group's capacity for self-regulation, then he is making room for the bolder members to try out their own initiatives and make their own suggestions, which some of the others may take them upon, even if they have reservations. In this phase leadership is not delegated, it is simply exercised, though not for long, since others will be quick to protect their independence from these new leaders. Sibling rivalry is the next thing on the agenda.

The leader will encourage others to take over leadership functions, but will resist any premature fixing of leadership structures. What the group is supposed to learn from this is that leadership in this sense is not a privilege, but rather an important contribution to group functionality, and that depending on the situation to be dealt with or the job to be done it can be exercised by different members of the group.

Occasional confusion and standing in each other's way mean that a group is headed into its first crisis and has therefore reached a crucial point. There is now a growing recognition and willingness to accept the necessity of laying down decision-making rules, distributing roles and functions, defining acceptable standards for group behaviour and accepting diverse skills within the group. It is now

beginning to get organised and to perceive itself as a group.

During this turbulent phase it would be wrong to use small groups as a fallback position, or to use them too often. Otherwise the group will later lack a solid foundation of truly common rules and concepts of how members deal with each other, how decisions are made and what are mutually acceptable ways of working together. This is when a participant will realise what he should be taking responsibility for in terms of his own learning process as well as the progress of the whole group.

As strenuous as this phase may be for leaders and participants alike, there would be much more cause for concern if it did not occur at all. Otherwise, the issues pertaining to this phase can crop up time and again at a later stage, and can then prove to be much more time-consuming than they would have been had they been dealt with at the outset. Conflicts that are avoided at this time will then occur further down the road, or else a group will have to subject itself to continuous self-scrutiny in order to avoid such conflicts. A restrained atmosphere like this is not a good foundation for an active learning environment. Besides, conflicts serve to achieve quite a bit of clarity about the outlines of the personalities involved and their lighter and darker aspects, as well as about the outlines of the problem itself.

This is why themes which lead to improved transparency belong in this second phase, such as compiling and defining common goals and interests ("What do I want to work on?"), so that individual points of departure can be linked to one another. An initial diagnosis of problems and issues brought along by participants makes common and divergent aspects visible.

Offering themes that allow a playful form of rivalry and strife helps individuals determine what their position within the group is. Additional offers providing contact and clarification of relations help reduce communication barriers. Initial themes allow the introduction of various opinions and backgrounds, enhance listening

and constructive conflicts and should be accompanied by appropriate evaluation and feedback sessions.

When determining limits and liberties, questions about values and standards automatically arise and must be addressed. It is especially in this area that common ground needs to be established if a true group is to be created. At this point the group's standards are not yet completely determined and thus still easier to negotiate. Later, standards can lie in a group's way like huge boulders that have to be tediously rolled away. This is why group leaders will pay special attention to the creation of standards during this phase.

It may look as if this phase were characterised by strife and turbulence alone. Indeed these are important features of this phase, especially for groups working on themes of common concern which affect them emotionally. But struggles and conflicts lead to a great deal of intimacy. By measuring their forces, people get to know each other better. Besides, only few people can stand negative tension for very long before they approach others. As a result, group members will develop a sense of closeness and belonging sooner than expected.

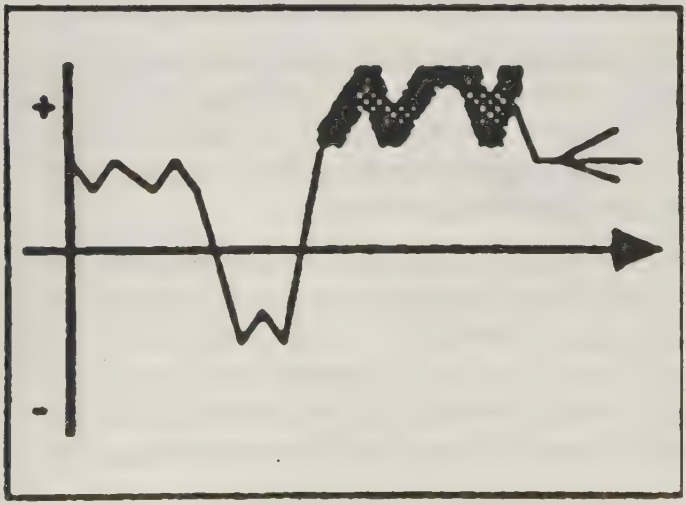
So the group's mood curve starts back upwards before this phase is over. The feeling of belonging together becomes stronger. Bonds are created which in turn lead to dependency, but not as a result of insecurity – as was the case during the initial phase – but rather as a result of autonomous decisions. During this phase all members have shown strengths and weaknesses and have made investments. The group now has a common history.

At this time group leaders should not let themselves be carried away by this new high. The secret desire to "keep things this way" might contribute to a group standard stipulating that this new-found harmony must not be endangered. This in turn has the inherent danger of avoiding conflicts and not dealing with reality. Group leaders continue to be reality's representative.

It is difficult to admit new members to the group at this stage. Should this be allowed nevertheless, it leads to a relapse back to previous phases, since the "novice" needs his own place within the group and this distorts the hard-earned balance achieved by all.

Usually a group will notice by itself that this can lead to difficulties: the desire for harmony creates a situation where the group ends up running in place. Punishment or isolation of "deviants" hampers creativity and productivity. Recognising this means a further step in the direction of phase three.

The true goal of this second phase is developing a *social organisation of the group*, not encouraging conflicts. Conflicts, rather, can be regarded as a means to achieve this goal. This is the background against which a group proceeds to the next phase.



Phase 3: Work Satisfaction and Productivity

At the end of the second phase participants are already aware that they can learn from each other and that it is easier and more efficient to go after goals together. This is then applied in full during the third phase. Differences are recognised as being useful, since

they introduce diversity, which is necessary for a creative working approach. Tasks can now be distributed and a variety of roles can be defined without endangering individual members' sense of belonging to the group. The group becomes open to new issues and constructive approaches to the theme itself.

The group is now in a phase of fairly stable functioning. Tasks are dealt with constructively. The group is capable of deciding on its own what needs to done in order to reach its targets, and to actually do so in an organised fashion. Only a few words are needed to achieve understanding, and communication is possible without any serious distortions. This is an atmosphere characterised by mutual give and take. There is now a well-developed group structure with a familiar etiquette and secure interpersonal relations. All activities can now be used for the benefit of the group theme. The need to achieve results creates additional energy.

Group leaders can restrict themselves to making relatively few offers and intervening only rarely in this phase. They help the group plan and organise its work, offer advice when a method or procedure is being selected and may provide a running commentary during decision-making processes.

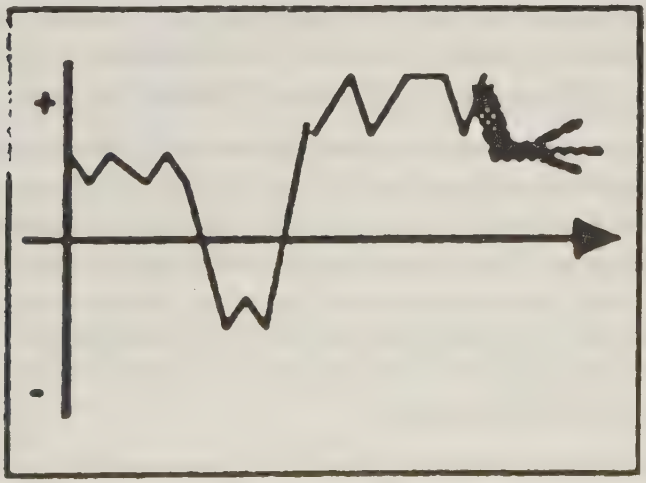
It is now possible to do justice to issues from the thematic level and we can count on energy rather than disruption coming from the psychosocial level, if it is not forgotten altogether since the group is now so absorbed in thematic work. Groups are now no longer so prone to mood swings. Frustration and conflicts can be borne without calling a group's functionality into question.

Of course this phase is not free of potential crises. Each participant develops in his own individual direction. There is no statistical state of maturity. Increasing familiarity and intensity of relations are no guarantee against internal conflicts, though they do facilitate conflict resolution. Every time a new problem crops up on the thematic or on the psychosocial level, this results in an urgent appeal for change. Everyday reality and the restricted amount

of time during which a group will be meeting lead to pressure that the group needs be in a position to deal with.

Even during this phase, it remains an important issue for the designated group leaders and group participants alike to scrutinise their roles, leadership structures, working methods and the overall group atmosphere as to whether they are still appropriate or desirable, i.e. whether they meet the needs of the thematic *and* psychosocial levels.

Thus previous phases are cyclically repeated during this phase as well. For example, every new day is a small new beginning. Each new way of approaching a theme, each new task results in a slightly different distribution of roles, awakens new fears and provides fresh impetus to attain power, assert oneself or receive affection and support. If these "mini-cycles within the third phase were to be ignored, this would be an inadvertent staging of its failure.



Phase 4: Winding up and farewell

In theory a group can continue to meet for as long as it succeeds in finding common themes and in meeting the needs of thematic and psychosocial level. These needs are subject to change -

for example, due to new goals, a change in atmosphere, members' new interests or new tasks. Thus these needs presuppose that a group is able and willing to continuously check and if necessary adjust its working methods, distribution of roles, leadership structures and other processes on both levels. When this stops happening, a group will begin to drift apart or will be brought to an end by rising internal and external pressure, which occurs uncomfortably and abruptly.

However, the end of a group is often "predetermined", either by a fixed duration or because its goals have been fulfilled, as is the case, for example with project or therapy groups. We will be dealing only with the final phase of learning groups set within a specific time frame.

The problem specific to these groups is that the time at which they are to end is fixed from the very beginning, irrespectively of whether each participant has achieved his goals and whether the theme has been dealt with in a satisfactory way, or whether members wish to say goodbye because they feel that this is the right time. This is why the end has to be consciously prepared and approached.

Planning and process monitoring done by the group leader include the inevitable end from the very beginning. Groups, on the other hand, especially in their productive third phase, like to imagine that they will exist as such almost indefinitely. Creativity and growth are positive experiences, whereas winding up and completion tend to be unpleasant and painful. Feeling this pain is put off as long as possible, since groups do not want to deal with it until as late a time as possible.

What feels unpleasant is not only the prospect of having to part from other group members, but also the growing awareness that tomorrow they will all have to go back to their point of departure, where others (family, friends, colleagues, superiors) were left behind when participants set off for the seminar. Much of what has been possible within the group will seem unfamiliar back there and

will not be readily repeatable. Much of what a participant recognised and experienced as being important will need to be translated in order to make it understandable and applicable.

Winding up, transfer and farewell are the three chief themes of the final phase. *Winding up* means completing discussions of all issues broached up to now, on the thematic and psychosocial levels alike. For example, if a participant goes home feeling that the solution of a thematic concern is not in line with his own concept of the "best" possible solution and is thus not internally reconciled with this result, then he will be able to summon less energy for applying what he has learned.

Transfer refers to the fact that participants will be asking themselves more often than during the previous days how they can apply what they have learned so far at home and on the job. In particular they will think about what might make it difficult to apply new forms of behaviour or knowledge. This will not be restricted to technical barriers.

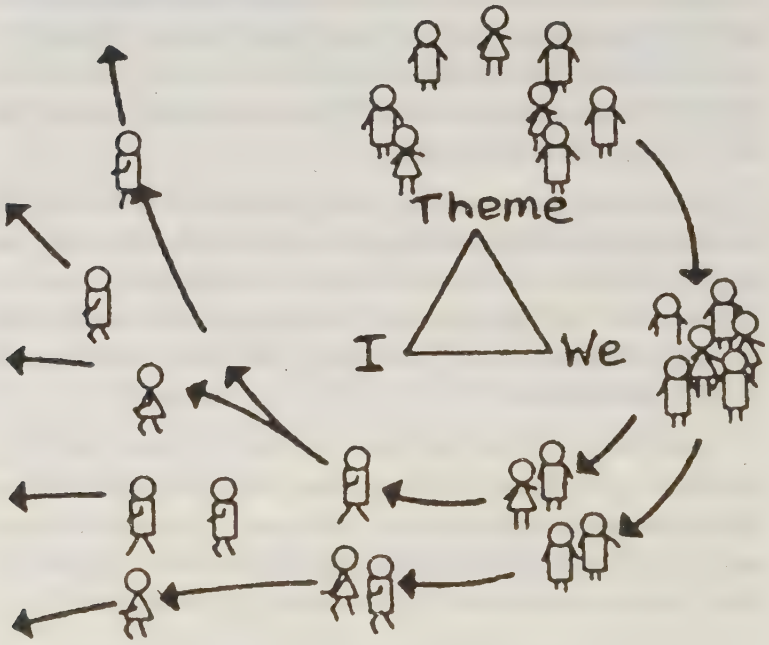
Application may be complicated due to emotional and social barriers set up by those who are concerned by the impending changes and adjustments. The final phase gives group members the opportunity to deal with these issues in a preventive fashion. This should help to replace illusions with more realistic assessments and steps.

Bidding *farewell* will consume more energy the longer a group has been together and the more personal relationships and themes developed during that time. Emotional bonds must now be brought to an end, at least for the time being.

Depending on a group's situation and the personalities of its members, various disruptions may occur. Some members might panic and try to catch up on everything they have not had time for so far. Others cannot manage to deal with difficulties involved with transfer and discount the whole issue by saying that the entire seminar was useless and not geared to practical situations, " It hasn't been at all helpful."

In both cases group leaders cannot respond by "making up for lost time," but rather by offering to explore with the participants their personal attitudes towards time, reality and representing their own interests.

In general the final phase – like the initial phase – is characterised by an individual lack of synchronism.



Graphic 4: The way back out of the group

Some are already practically seated in the train back home a few sessions before the end of the seminar, others refuse to hear the slightest mention of the word farewell, their remedy in this situation being furtive activity. And others may require more time to themselves, in order to contemplate in peace what they have learned and experienced and draw their own conclusions. Just as each participant had his own way of approaching the group at the outset, every one has their own personal way of ending things. Themes

and leadership should allow for this, since this helps the individual to continue in his own direction.

As has been said before, in thematic terms the issues now to be dealt with refer to:

-Completion of unfinished work or a decision as to when and where it will be continued,

-Transfer and preparation of reunions at home and at work,

-Saying farewell to each other.

Structures and themes will be arranged in such a way as to allow some distancing to develop. Evaluation themes referring to issues and processes help achieve this. They are an important link in the bridge to be built between here and home. And last but not least they are an important final offer to learn about the overall process by studying it in connection with the factors that influence it.

The final phase requires a good sense of timing: it should neither lead to a hasty farewell, nor should it taper off too early, since no one enjoys sitting in a waiting room.

By comparison to the initial phase, during the final phase we go back through the TCI-triangle in reverse: we wind up themes, dissolve our WE, possibly agree to contact individuals from the group and then leave the group as individuals, each in his own direction.

Chapter 10

AUTONOMY HAS A PRICE

Abe Brody

During the early stages of the development of TCI autonomy was viewed as strongly modified by interdependent needs and awareness of the world around. While it is possible to alter the limitations imposed upon one's autonomy, the limitations can never be ignored without serious consequences. As time has gone on, many people emphasised the autonomous side of the situation without regard to the limitations. This attitude has supported egoistic impulses which creates problems in group relationships. Leaders whose training had this same emphasis lack techniques for optimising group process while respecting individual needs.

Most learning techniques emphasise the needs of the teacher, the material being taught, and the smooth functioning of the group. People were too often regarded as containers to be filled. Seeing the learner as someone whose feelings and needs must be given primary consideration was a radical departure from conventional teaching. It is therefore easy to understand the emphasis TCI gives to autonomy, and such precepts as "Speak per I," "Be your own chairperson," and "Disturbances take precedence."

This paper is not intended to minimise the importance of this emphasis on autonomy. It will, however, suggest that attention

also be given to a balance between the autonomy of the individual and respect for the group's needs. Becoming aware of the cost of each autonomous act enables the principles of TCI to be used more effectively and more responsibly. This awareness can help group leaders to decide when and how to intervene in order to facilitate group process. How this can alter the use of some of the basic tenets of TCI, will be illustrated in the remainder of this paper.

Disturbances Take Precedence

Each member of a workshop needs to be aware that giving precedence to a disturbance will halt the smooth flow of group process and cause each of the group members to attend to the needs of a single individual. The individual must be aware of the value of expressing his/her disturbance, e.g. freeing the individual to be a more involved and effective group member, encouraging other members to express their feelings, etc., and balancing it against the price the group as a whole and the individual members will pay for the interruption. How seriously will the expression of a disturbance upset the group? If the decision to introduce one's disturbance into the group results from a weighing of the value against the cost, both the individual's needs and those of the group are respected and the decision is both autonomous and responsible.

Anyone who has participated in even a few workshops has had the experience of being frustrated as another member disrupts the group with a lengthy discussion of some matter of concern only to the speaker while the group leader does nothing to return the group to the theme. It is the leader's responsibility to weigh the advantages and disadvantages resulting from focusing on the disturbance. How much time is it useful for the group to spend on the disturbance? Can the individual member be helped to become integrated into the group and relate to the theme in a reasonably short time? Are other members of the group involving themselves in the content of the disturbance? How much is the group process being advanced as the disturbance is permitted to take centre

stage? Is the group becoming better able to pursue the theme or is the disturbance becoming a block to further progress? Responsible group leading involves a conscious awareness of both the value and cost of attending to each disturbance.

Respect for the needs of one individual cannot be permitted to overwhelm the needs of each of the other members of the group as well as the goals of the group as a whole. It is easier to achieve a more balanced approach if the difference between respect and acceptance of a person and respect and acceptance of that person's behaviour is clear. Compassionate respect for someone enables that person to accept disapproval of his or her behaviour and not regard it as personal rejection. By attending to these consideration, the leader can make the most effective use of the principle that disturbances take precedence and avoid the excesses that can result from unbalanced attention to any one individual's disturbance.

A member of a group I was leading behaved in a way that interfered with the flow of the group process. When I intervened, he strongly refused to stop, and when I again intervened, he said that he had never before been able to disagree so vigorously with a person in authority and felt that I should encourage his behaviour. I responded that I truly appreciated his accomplishment and asked if he would stop because the whole group would pay for his prolonged interruption and not because I, as leader, had asked him to. He then stopped talking without feeling rejected by me.

Be Your Own Chairperson

This phrase, so familiar to everyone exposed to TCI, is often used without reference to the price it may cost. Only if it is made clear that autonomous decisions have consequences that must be lived with can the importance of making responsible choices be properly appreciated.

Ruth Cohn devised a game she called, "I must do what I want to (for ten minutes)." The game has one inflexible rule - the player

must continually ask himself/herself, "Do I really want to continue doing what I am now doing, and if not, what do I really want to do?" Ruth Cohn makes it very clear that she does not mean "what I would like to do," but that "doing what I want to do" is a judgement that takes into account all the consequences the player can think of. Players are surprised at how difficult the simplest decision may become if made while constantly asking, "Do I really want to do this?" On the other hand, players can also be surprised by the calm, secure feeling that can result from following the rule. The game illustrates that if I am to be fully my own chairperson, I must be aware of the complexity of the task and be willing to accept the consequences of my behaviour.

A member of a TCI group who takes the above considerations into account would ask himself/herself questions like "Do I really want to interrupt the group process by bringing in my own personal issue." "Will it help me to be a more effective group member, so that the introduction of my disturbance is worthwhile?" "Is the issue so important to me that I am willing to cope with the possible impatience or disapproval of the other group members?" If the answer to questions like these is "yes," then the intervention is a responsible one and is likely to help the group progress toward its goal. It certainly reduces the number of trivial interruptions which may occur. My feelings are important, and the value of sharing them with the group members is great. The question is, "What is the cost of interfering with the ongoing group process if I speak out?" "Is it worth the price?"

Seen from the point of view of a group leader, equivalent considerations can be made. As a participant-leader, how much of my own personal concerns and feelings do I share? During a recent workshop, I felt that members of the group were left too long to cope with their reluctance to share their more personal feelings, and tension was becoming too strong. I spontaneously told the group that I felt I had made a mistake by not intervening

sooner. Although the decision to speak out was not made after a conscious evaluation of the situation, I would not have expressed my own feelings so vigorously if the group members were unfamiliar with TCI. However, this was a TCI training group and many members had considerable experience with the method. I therefore felt free to share my feelings and permit my role as participant to take precedence over my leadership function for a brief time. This relieved some of the tension that had developed and enabled the group to move on. If this had been an organisation meeting, I would have selected a less emotional response, since that kind of group might have difficulty accepting a leader who behaved like a participant.

As a leader, the extent to which I encourage and support the individual member's actions depends on my evaluation of the group process at the moment. If the individual's actions will move the group toward more effective functioning, then I support the behaviour. If the group process is interfered with, I minimise the interruption as smoothly as possible. Again, my standard is not to permit my respect for the individual member to outweigh my respect for the other members of the group and the group as a whole.

Conclusion

Maintaining a balance among the I, the We, and the Theme is familiar to every student of TCI. The balance between autonomy, interdependence, and external reality is not so familiar. I hope the preceding paragraphs have made it clear that I am urging a dynamic balance among these three and not only attention to the limiting factors. I want to propose that TCI emphasises three R's:

1. *Responsibility* - satisfy my wants with awareness of the demands I make on the world around me and the people in it. Be willing to accept the consequences of my behaviour.

2. *Respect* - Be aware of and give consideration to my own needs and the other living beings in my life.

3. *Reality* - Try to reduce the limitations the world place on me without denying the existence of those limitations.

While I have discussed these three R's in terms of TCI, it is very clear to me that they apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time. The media is full of examples of irresponsible behaviour, lacking respect for others, and for our environment. Terrorism, waste and pollution of the environment, and thoughtless satisfaction of our immediate impulses, are all too common. Realistically, no one can expect to eliminate behaviours like these, but a modification, however slight, in our own small section of the world can make life more meaningful and satisfying.

Chapter 11

REVOLUTIONARY EVOLUTION IN CLASSROOMS:

Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI)

Dr. Ruth C. Cohn

The school ladder of competition teaches impersonal and asocial values: It pays to be smart and to put down those who are not. It sanctions those who get by and get through and abandons those who are slow or search. Marks above mind, haste above heart, Me above You, are concomitant features of a competitive school system. It neglects interaction and cooperation and demands outdoing and winning. Thus, much of youth's living-learning spirit has gone the way of singing birds, bubbling fish and flowering weeds into a Silent Spring.

And so students learn to live with the schizophrenic-like split of "how to become a good person and love-your-neighbour kid who shares toys and candy and books; to be first in studies and gym and not to enjoy defeating others; and being helpful to people the Christian way; and out to prove them inferior on the class curve of achievement which condemns the meek who will be first in heaven."

Do I exaggerate? I might. This educational matter is close to my heart, and I may lose perspective. Yet I do not complain about bad people, indolent teachers, ignorant parents, callous principals, politicking communities, spoiled children - I accuse bad principles which I believe have not been sufficiently recognised; and so I stress the negative elements of traditional schooling - being aware of some of its merits (such as giving poor children a bit of a break rather than none, helping people to get beyond their families at an early enough age, allowing most people to enjoy some readings, music and glimpses of the world awareness).

Humanistic Goals in Education

I believe that most people want children to grow up to use their abilities for their own and other people's joy and usefulness and become productive social participants in their communities (which may be wished for on the smaller scale of family, village, or nation, or on the larger, human society.)

For goals to be reached, methods must match. The competitive principle, however, is adverse to education aimed towards personal and cooperative maturity; so is the so-called traditional "medical model" in which the patient is acted upon by someone who has knowledge of his illness. If the ill person is totally unconscious, this model is adequate. The doctor is subject, the patient is object. However, in most illnesses the patient is conscious and able to cooperate in research and cure of the sickness. (A doctor who does not use the patient as his own researcher and therapist misses out as a healer.)

A similar model has been used in education. The subjects (parents, teachers, and community) determine what is taught to objects (children and students). Parents and school system unite in feeding and programming children. They determine what students and children must learn, "what is good for them" without realising that learning depends on the process of discovery rather than on pre-processed input. This "things" the students and stunts their growth, joy, and liveliness.

If doctors and teachers do not respect the need for communicative and discovering processes with their patients and students and treat them as "objects," they promote dependency and autism. When they treat them as subjects, i.e. as participants of communication and discovery, they further their awareness of autonomy and interdependence.

Experiential psychotherapists have increasingly challenged the traditional medical model in both medicine and education. This humanist progress evolved from psychoanalysis, which initially followed the medical model as in hypnosis.

Psychoanalysis led to knowledge which our ancestors did not possess; for instance, that early strict toilet training may not so much lead toward effective cleanliness as to hateful stubbornness, ineffective ruminations (compulsions) and apathy; or that keeping parents' disagreements hidden in family closets may be more damaging to their children than having open fights; or that phoney or unloving parent-child relationships will promote suspicious, violent or withdrawn personalities; or that insisting on learning against children's own rhythm may lead them to develop unthinking computer brains and pseudo-stupidity.

Experiential psychotherapy has grown from psychoanalytic insights regarding parental impact on the child, and biological phenomena, to understand growth as being affected by a wider field of social contacts. Some experiential psychotherapists have become practitioners of integrated humanistic philosophy and education. The Theme-Centered Interactional system was initiated by me directly out of the gains of knowledge from psychoanalysis and group-psychotherapy.

I use the word humanism here as embracing all philosophies and practices which value and support the human being as deserving respect and care, regardless of status, good or bad deeds, religious affiliations, racial descant, gender, wealth of talent or material goods, etc.

Goals such as "widening horizons, loving one's neighbour, being effective, and rightfully pursuing happiness and justice for all" may now rise - on the basis of the newly gained knowledge and skills - from the status of slogans and wishful thinking toward their realisation. Human nature is not a static given but a potential, which can be actualised.

A humanist teacher, like a good therapist – unimpeded by external demands - does not try to impart static knowledge or superimpose interpretations. He/she remains in a living-learning process with the students, as knowledge cannot simply be passed on and remains alive. (Rote learning of names and facts has value only within a meaningful context, such as learning words of a useful language, labels or numbers necessary within a field of concern.) The humanist teacher structures situations in which discovery is likely to occur.

Evolution toward Humanism in Schools

A humanist teacher believes in the importance of finding ones own way (forever new!). He/she asks questions like these:

Who am I? What is important to me? What do I want to experience and achieve Here and Now?

Who are you, the students? What is important to you? What do you want?

What do we have to consider? Our wants, the parents' and community wants, time, space, materials, the curriculum? What are our unchangeable givens? What compromises can we think of? How do we balance between "Must" and "I-feel-like" to get toward what we will realistically decide to do? How do we choose our tasks, our themes for studying? How can we change what we do not like in our school system (while we are in it!)?

Such simple basic questions are encountered by teachers with enthusiasm or anger:

"We have to follow the curriculum - we have to do what has to be done." I have to push it down my students' throats or they won't make it."

"We have no time for long discussions on what to do - it's all in the curriculum what we have to do. " I have to hand in plans for the week beforehand, I cannot shift and please." "Where do you live, in Paradise? How do Johnny and Mary get into college if I don't teach them what is requested?"

Johnny and Mary have long been trained to learn "for later on in life" and not to search for questions which they personally might want to find answers for. By the time "later on in life" arrives, they are likely to have learned that inner strivings and social usefulness do not matter but conforming in appearance and one- upmanship do.

Teachers, students, and their parents have learned to accept the weird phenomenon of working for marks and cramming for examinations as the normal way of life. Generations of people have filled their brain storage-rooms with the results of dead learning, to the point of fixations and explosive combustion. There has been little time for contemplation and associative creativity.

Competition as such is a natural phenomenon. It comes to pass when necessary things or services are scarce, or when people are not wise in the distribution of essentials such as food, oil, or loving care. Anger, anxiety, hostility, and apathy ensue. The Principle of Competition as an artificial educational maxim arouses such destructive emotions by its inherent frustrating design. Burdened with too many facts and things and with a stuffed-up heart, many of our young people have taken the last logical step before ruin or rebirth of our society: perfecting the art of cheating and the deification of violence.

The Principle of Competition as an educational tool has been seen as a device of capitalist society. It has been said that competitive, Peter-Principled people are a necessity to keep the capitalist system alive. I do not believe this is necessarily so. There could

be competitive education in socialist countries and cooperative education in capitalist society. Most people are afraid of change, which keeps people, systems, rules, governments, education in power even when their usefulness has long been proven inadequate. Neither the oppressed nor the ruler think creatively of causes and consequences of their systems. They do not discover the chain reaction that leads from frustration to violence or from depleting earth energy to famine. Unaware of causes and consequences, frustrations lead to blaming and violence. Revolutions transfer ownership and power from one person or group to another. Names and titles of rulers and ruled are changed without altering the painful persecutor-victim cycle itself.

I see the most tragic aspect of this educational situation as the almost universal lack of awareness about the presence and destructiveness of both the Model of Thinking People and the Principle of Competition. Instead, people are being blamed - not for their apathy over changing what needs to be changed, but for being of bad faith - which they rarely are.

Teachers resign from their initial enthusiasm and their wish to use themselves in behalf of students. Depending on their credo, they blame the conservative or progressive faction of teachers, principals, or community. And they join the apathetic crowd.

Students rarely even conceive of the possibility that learning without competitive examinations could produce knowing, worthwhile people including scholars. Their brief fight for more freedom and. relevant teaching quickly subside under suppression and violence; and also, I believe, under the cloud of not knowing about their own and other people's living-learning spirit in non-competitive structures.

I believe that the use of humanistic principles of cooperation, interaction, personal growth, and mastery in education can promote a process of Revolutionary Evolution which may fulfil the task no revolution has previously fulfilled: not to replace one dic-

tating government, class, industry, race, party, by another but to free all humans to create an equal and free society.

Revolutionary Evolution in classrooms means for our schools to promote self-fulfilment, cooperative responsibility, and mastery of knowledge and skills. It means to put humanistic living-learning values against competitive dead-storage ones.

Living-learning means mastery of helping food and beauty grow from the soil; mastery of making and fixing tools and machines; mastery of words in reading and writing and speaking one's own and other languages; mastery means to put colours to things and houses, or to use them to express the inner world on paper or cloth; mastery means to put thoughts into workable theories, to perceive daily more of what the world is like and how it can and should be influenced. Mastery means to learn more about personal abilities and to become the conscious, decisive regulator of inner strivings in the context of the world around. Mastery means to choose loves wisely and to control hatred by letting it be without guilt or killing.

To "humanise" or to "thing" people that is the question for us and our time.

Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI)

A Humanistic System of Education - THE WILL APPROACH

With the help of humanist philosophy, experiential therapy and many colleagues and students, I have attempted to deduce a system out of psychotherapeutic knowledge and group therapeutic skills to improve group communication and education. In the following pages, I will attempt to outline some of TCI's principles and techniques of living-learning as they pertain to classroom teaching. The WILL approach is applicable to all situations which involve groups. Techniques are adjustable to the various kinds and purposes of groups. This paper will not deal with the philosophical and psychological foundations of the TCI system but with some of its aspects and techniques pertaining to classrooms.

TCI is based on a working hypothesis that a group is an interactional group when each person, the group as a whole and their study or task are seen as of equal importance. The task (or study or focus of attention) is called the Theme (or the "IT"). The IT is that small segment of reality that happens to be the immediate focus of the participants; they are theme-centered. Each person (in his/her attentiveness to the theme and the other participants) is I; all people in relation to each I and the IT are WE. The basic working hypothesis that I, WE, and IT are of equal importance – is practised when equal attention is given to the three factors. (The interactional group can be visualised as an equilateral triangle with I, WE, IT points. In the process of group interaction, even-sidedness can never be maintained for longer than minutes. Any one of the I, WE, IT variables must be in the foreground long enough not to become superficial and not so long as to go stale or leave people or task by the wayside.) The basic skills of the WILL approach is the art of "dynamic balancing" between these three factors and a fourth one, the GLOBE; the Globe surrounds the group as its environment (in concentric circles of closeness and distance in time, space and impact).

I define the situational givens that surround each person and the group as a whole as the GLOBE. The I-WE-IT triangle is enveloped and penetrated by interaction with the situational environment. This includes time, space, society, history, the human environment, earth, stars, space - all fractions of the universe. An interactional group is, structurally speaking, a triangle in the (onion-like) globe.

TCI's "Equal Importance Hypothesis" (of I-WE-IT-GLOBE) is, in my opinion, the implicit foundation of any humanistic theory and practice. I am as important as you and as We; we are interdependent with the world as a whole - the big It that supports and penetrates us, and requests our support and interaction.

The whole world is, however, never in reach of our senses and

mind. We can only grasp splinters in succession. The tiny parts, as focus of our mutual attention are our immediate It. In therapy groups this It may be one person's problems which are of general concern; or it may be a theme like "How do I deal with anxiety (or pain)? In an organisational group it may be "Establishing Effective Channels of Communication in our Organisation." In a classroom, "I and Electricity," or "Born of the End of the Century in London - how would I have lived?" or "I am a Man. I am a Woman. I am a Boy. I am a Girl. - Role ± Real?"

I am the only person who knows about me from within. I am aware of some of my inner strivings. I have perceptions, images, feelings, thoughts. I am my own captain, the chairperson of my various strivings, of my sensations, motivations, anxieties. I am also my own chairperson with regard to all of you, as I relate and communicate. As my own chairperson I create my life to some extent by my decisions. As I respect myself the way I am, with good and bad decisions and the ability to improve, I am likely to attribute the same right and responsibility to you.

A person is both a psychobiological unit and partner of social and cosmic systems. In our subjective shared experience we have some freedom of choice (which may or may not be substantiated by a super- human intelligence.) The range of freedom is wider for persons in good health, with rich endowment of talents, favourable socio-economic circumstances, and sustained faith that he/she is of value. The range of freedom is narrower for people who live in ill health, poverty, with poor endowment, in under-privileged socio-economic circumstances, and with apathy or resignation. The I can experience itself as freer or more entrapped.

The humanist therapist or teacher endeavours to widen his/her own, and the students' field of freedom for choice and depth. This is their job. The task includes aiding people to recognise their internal and external situation and to "accept with serenity, that which cannot be changed, to change with courage that which can be

changed, and to have the wisdom to know the difference."

This certainly is not easy. We are, as humans, the unit I and the part WE. This fact puts us on the paradoxical awareness swing of being self-run units and of being particles of social and cosmic systems; we are always autonomous and always interdependent. Each I then has ego-centric responsibility for himself/herself; and partial responsibility for everyone else - more to those we consider close, some for the situational universe (the globe) in which and through which we are in interaction, that is in existence with everybody and everything.

In a healthy balance, self-directed and other-directed strivings are interwoven. Often they are felt as uncomfortable existential burdens, conflicts and tasks. The process of balancing is necessarily continuous; when the relationship between I and WE becomes rigid, conflicts change into illness.

When a multitude of persons suffer from similar autistic or dependent symptoms, the culture may be called sick. I believe that Western culture today suffers from the over-emphasis on egocentric strivings on the basis of competitive education. Eastern cultures may suffer from self-denial by traditional religious requests with their "giving up the ego" for the goal of union in transcendence; or in the new political version of giving up self-wishes for the goal of communal unity.

"Dynamic Balancing" is the core concept of TCI. That means to balance within the existential paradox of being unit and being part balancing between the I-WE-IT factors of the group; balancing between the physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual needs and wants; balancing between giving and receiving, listening and talking, between activity and rest.

THE WILL APPROACH IN CLASSROOMS: Structure, Process and Balance

In TCI classrooms teachers are in charge of initiating structure,

process and balance. They are simultaneously builders of structure, guardians of process, experts in knowledge or ways of search, and human beings with the same primary needs as those of the students. They are in charge of initiating the class to become a group rather than a bunch of unrelated people or competitors. The teachers should be aware of personal needs and wishes as well as of those of others and to act accordingly. The teacher emphasises the importance of the group as an interactional WE including students and teacher; and he/she emphasises the importance of tasks, themes, studies and actions. The teacher emphasises the givens in our world and the importance of mastering skills, cooperating with others, and perceiving the world as sharing in give and take. (Autonomy and interdependence, respect for life and growth, and responsibility are axiomatic basic assumptions of the Theme-Centered Interactional System.)

In the following pages I will survey some possibilities of how Dynamic Balancing of I, WE, and IT factors may be pursued by teachers. There are, of course, scores of technical aids, which are useful, which to describe goes beyond the frame of this article.

Emphasising the I-Factor (Person) in the Classroom includes:

To respect the teacher as a person responsible for him-/herself as a growing person. ("To be supportive of other people's importance requires awareness of my own; I respect the other "because he/she is like me.")

To accept that values are guidelines to live by, not permanent achievements. (Not to expect that I am an ideal image - or any kind of image. Not having to know what I do not know - I may want to find out, nor having to be what I am not. To be real rather than role.)

To take for granted that people have backs that ache, stomachs which cramp and throats which can feel choked - or to feel light and comfortable; and to include the facts in considerations and actions.

To have thoughts which come as flashes of discovery, or to feel empty.

To allow for faith in being loved by a Higher Being or to believe that there is nothing beyond; to differentiate faith and knowledge.

To be aware that someone may have been born into a childhood of light and love, and that someone else may have grown up in the misery of lacking food and things, or belonging to a cold and torn-up family; and to practice awareness and corresponding skills accordingly.

To seek truth and never be too certain. To err and to return for improvement. Not to try to be a sample of virtue and not to be without restraint.

Not to indulge in brainfeeding nor to abstain from giving with joy. To be aware of the ebb and flow of energies in everybody and to greet the challenge of change.

To try to understand and outgrow early harmful influences, which include having been raised with competitive and "thinging-people" principles.

To attempt to be aware of transferences and countertransferences as illusions that people bring along from their childhood experiences, and to encounter these illusions by standing up to reality. This includes the ideas that teachers are archetypes of authority - the Master-Image illusion that father/mother are infallible or monstrous and all-powerful.

To admit failures, achievements, feelings, vulnerabilities.

To try being fair and not always succeeding.

To be authentic yet tactful in the choice of statements, and sufficiently self-protective.

Working toward increasing communication by diminishing vulnerabilities and choosing what to say with "selective authenticity."

To take interests and feelings seriously - not only achievements and interactions. Feelings are what they are. Actions need control. Feelings need understanding; they may or may not change. (Don't be furious" is silly. Instead, "I see that you are furious - something must be upsetting you" is conducive to dialogue and change. My furore is my property; my furious action carries interpersonal responsibility.)

To challenge students with this basic message is the TCI approach (adjustable to age maturity of the student); "You are your own chairperson. Listen to your inside committee of needs, wishes, motivations, ideas; look outside of yourself with your senses - hear, see, smell, perceive. Use your mind; your knowledge, your judgements, your responsibility, your thinking. Decide carefully. Nobody can make your decisions.

We need to speak clearly and to listen carefully to each other, as this is our only bridge from island to island. Consider what is important for you to say and hear. Tell us when you want help. We can't guess at each other. Guessing is too cumbersome and unsafe; we can use words clearly and authentically. Get from this what you want to get, offer what you want to give and take your reactions to others seriously. Risk to ask for what you want - you may or you may not receive it. Accept this as reality.

If' you are unable to be interested in what is going on in the classroom - if you are too angry, or too bored, or in pain or too excited with something that you enjoy so that you can't concentrate, say so. Disturbances and excitements take precedence (if you can't fully participate)

The teacher must know that he/she carries full responsibility only for his/her own learning/ teaching and cannot carry it for the students.

Yet, in the paradox of living by this rightful decision, the teacher accepts part responsibility for the students' living-learning by tak-

ing his/her own responsibility for teaching with discernment; he/she uses the students' feedback and progress for guidance. The teacher who learns is being helped by the students who teach him/her how to teach. The learning student is being helped by the learning teacher's teaching. In other words, by the teaching-learning process of teachers' and students', discovery occurs for both of them.

Emphasising the "IT"-Factor (Theme, Task) in the Classroom

We cannot perceive the world all at once. The little segment a person and group concentrates on is the here and now focus of learning; the IT. In living-learning classrooms, the IT is relevant to the people. Their input and output of communication about this IT widens their horizons.

All learning is interactional. This is obvious when people are gathered in one room and communicate with each other. It is less apparent when books or TV replace live company. But even in solitude, introjected interaction continues, documented by language - our words inside; forming the sediment of communicative living.

People who work together in cooperation stimulate and enlighten each other. The best themes are those which grow out of people's realistic, daily and personal experiences. Living-learning emphasis is not on motivating students but on helping them to find their own personal motivations and themes. The teacher's basic question is not: "How do I motivate students?" but "How do they live? What are their interests? Where are those of the community?"

The theme-setting can only evolve slowly out of patient work of many parents, teachers and students. Most theme-setting is handicapped by a curriculum that may or may not fall into the immediate interest sphere of students. A curriculum is (by necessity) always behind the times and away from the immediate. This is

a regrettable segment of traditional education. Thus teachers and students are deprived (to an extent) of dealing with the immediate concerns which would naturally also lead them into subjects of the relevant past and distant subjects as a matter of normal process. They cannot, as it is now, let their interests grow and deepen, since they are being pushed from subject to subject - in the dead-learning of quantity without time.

Accepting the fact that teachers have to adjust to teach the given curriculum, even personally distant themes can be helped to become more relevant if students are being guided to look for personal relevance in every given subject. The driest topic can become a matter of passionate concern if students find their own entry into it. Initial contact to any theme is easiest through personalization: "If I were..." or "What does this mean to me?" This approach has usually been accepted for small children but often denied to adults and "adulterated" children. Personalization is useful. The compromise of making other-directed distant subjects relevant carries within itself a danger for individuals and society. Students and teachers can be led away from where their passion would naturally be, i.e., to recognise their personal and social environment and look for new ways in living together. A distant and superficial menu of facts can seduce students and teachers from what really matters, and by dead-learning youthful useful time can so be wasted.

Theme-setting (finding the relevant topic and its formulation) is a skill. Finding the topic in utter freedom of interest would mean to search for all persons' (including the teacher's) goals. It would include perceiving their own environment sharply and integrating perceptions and ideas into their own frames of reference. This framework could be widened through teachers, books, films and other learning tools. There would be openness to themes of study, themes of action, themes with small groups within the class, themes that all would want to explore.

Theme-setting in schools with given curricula requires the ability to combine the obligatory with "where the group is."

The theme must not be too narrow, or too wide. It must be concrete enough to stimulate and not so definite as to exclude new perspectives or any one person in the group. It must be short enough for easy recall. If the class is large, parallel groups or different sub-themes must be established.

The theme needs introduction. It is hard for most people to find enough stimulation by search within. The theme can be introduced by relevant activity or by mutual exchange. The theme can be introduced verbally by provoking relevant images, memories or meditation. It can be presented in a short lecture (not exceeding 5-7 minutes; a longer lecture stultifies spontaneity and interaction). It can be introduced by a guided silence (leading the participants into their past and present relatedness to the theme, their thoughts, feelings and immediate connections). Introductions can include games, dialogues, role-playing, here-now group interaction, as long as they lead to the topic. Of importance is that any theme and any introduction include everybody in the living-learning class.

The theme is supported by the teacher's authentic interest in it and the support she/he gives to that of the students. "I cannot know your ways of learning best; I would like to help you find yours." Although the teacher cannot be anybody's chairperson, he/she is often in the position of helping students to find methods or techniques, to stimulate by exploring ideas or facts. It is destructive to only ask, "What do you want to do?" The Kindergarten joke. "Teacher, must we do again today what we want to do?" reveals the need for stimulation and structure. The challenge to an individual of taking sole responsibility for making his/her choices requires first that the person possess enough inner freedom to perceive, awareness of goals, and stored knowledge and alternatives to choose from. Education is a process of dosing challenges and tasks according to the potential and stage of maturation of the student.

Personal relatedness to themes can be found through brain-and-hearts or mind dialogues, games, interactional discussions. Sometimes deeper disturbances relate directly to the subject matter and need to be recognised and worked through before learning can take place.

It is amazing how many seemingly deep-reaching disturbances can be relieved and even worked through when a class of students has become cooperative and genuinely benevolent. The atmosphere of acceptance, the similarity of human difficulties, the eagerness to help are potent curative agents. Often these seem to be more potent in classrooms than even in therapy groups. The bond of collective endeavour, of being in the same boat, and wanting to complete tasks, exhilarate and accelerate; this is only true when the competitive angle has been sufficiently overcome.

The theme is supported by teachers being teacher-students and students being student-teachers. Nothing is more supportive to the theme than studying together. Most teachers readily admit that their own learning deepened when they started to teach. The same is true for students. Giving and receiving are existential needs. To be deprived of either is hardship. Teachers do well to be taught by their students.

The theme can be supported by structuring the classroom in small discussion, activity, or study groups. The theme can be supported by "inter-reading" or "inter- writing" in groups of 3 or 4. (The stimulus of 3-4 people doing something together in technically creative ways is rewarding.)

When I suggest "inter-writing", the class divides into subgroups of 3-4 students. They choose any sub-theme they want to explore in any way they wish, with the goal of putting some of their study into written words. Results are essays, skits, poetry, research, jokes, fairy tales, various work projects; sometimes written by all, sometimes by one or two. Almost all students, even the avowed "non-writers" enjoy this stimulating experience.

The theme is supported by not fiendishly sticking to it. If the class spends only some part of the time directly on subject matter, more integrated learning comes to pass than when the group sticks to the theme all the time. When personal and group needs are taken seriously, theme work flows better and with less strain. (Full emotional involvement radiates into the spirit of work and creative and cooperative action.)

Emphasising the "WE"-Factor (Group) in the Classroom

The WE connects all I's who interact around the IT. The WE gains in depth by each person's deepening awareness and involvement in the self, the group, and the theme.

The teacher promotes the WE in the classroom:

by his/her respecting each person's dignity and fostering awareness of autonomy and interdependence;

by the expressed belief that mastery of skills and creative use of one's potential are inherent needs of people which can only be subdued through personal and societal illness;

by employing cooperative rather than competitive principles which promote the wish in the group to include weaker and disturbed students into the WE-ness and activities of the class and to reduce distrust and anxiety;

by accepting and promoting the wish for silence, solitude and meditation together with active work attitudes;

by continually reminding students of their responsibility for their own decisions, their perceptions, thoughts, judgements, actions, and awareness of feelings and sensations. As students gain in personal assurance and self-determination, they grow in their capacity to grant others the same right and responsibility. This attitude is diametrically opposed to the ideals of obedience and conformity, which push weak egos not to form a strong WE but a brittle herd. The WE is as solid as its component I's;

by interspersing group themes into the work-plan. Themes generated by inherent conflicts in the life of the classroom. These may be formulated as they come up and brought out in scheduled or spontaneous class discussions. Themes must be formulated so that the conflicts as well as solutions are promoted, for instance "Recognising and Appreciating Differences, Keeping it in and letting it out - When and How? When not?"

by structuring the classroom in various group sizes - smallest, middle-sized, large and total groups. Intimacy is unlikely to evolve in very large groups. It grows easily in noncompetitive small ones. Intimacy can be transferred from smallest to larger groups.

The membership in small groups should rotate so that each student will get acquainted with the whole class and not form tight sub-groups;

by giving leadership instructions to students as early as possible. The auxiliary "rules" of TCI can be helpful if they are taught as aids and not as dogma and are practised by the teacher too. The rules are deduced from postulates that are existential facts that have been made explicit;

by allowing for and promoting teamwork. The principle of cooperation must be stressed. The appreciation of teamwork must not interfere with appreciation of individual skills and activities.

by promoting encounter games and by sharing one's life history and experiences. Cooperative living requires understanding. The background helps to illuminate the foreground.

by accepting tasks from the world outside - tasks which are of realistic relevance and extend the cooperative principle beyond the classroom. This will avoid the group dynamic phenomenon of the "We-They" syndrome. We are good - They are bad. (A solid group accepts strangers and outside concerns. A group with basic difficulties among its members shuns strangers in chicken-pecking-order fashion.) Beyond the educational value for the class, such

outside activity extends humanistic principles into the community at large. WE-ness is especially promoted by abandoning the (undemocratic) principle of deciding questions by majority votes. Although voting is commonly hailed as democratic procedure, it may resemble authoritarian processes. Neither of them protects the individual. Minorities in thought or power are pushed out or under. Hurt, hostility, non-cooperation often result ("to prove that we would do better than you"). As long as people must win out or lose, their reasoning and cooperative actions are not at their best; an outside enemy is therefore often needed to bring cooperation and unity to pass.

When people are challenged to include all viewpoints and to work toward reaching acceptable consensus or compromise, cooperation is required. Experiments with such ideas have convinced me that the mere switch toward precise statements and careful listening has tremendously beneficial effects on decision making. People who are really listened to are much more ready to listen carefully themselves. They don't have to think of what to say next while the other speaks or how to attack or how to defend themselves.

The Hebrew version of the Golden Rule says: "Respect your neighbour; he is like you."

Humanistic education requires new directives and Job descriptions for teachers. The principles of People- Thinging and Competition which are all pervasive in our schools must be detected and replaced by humanistic and cooperative guidelines.

The Teacher's job description may include:

(1) experiencing and studying their own personalities thus promoting awareness of their own and their students' autonomy and interdependence and "response-ability."

(2) experiencing and studying interactional structures, processes and interventions and using them to promote equally personal

growth, cooperation and mastery of skills.

(3) experiencing and studying situations and curriculum material and working with personalised themes which promote social and personal relevance, depth and creativity.

(4) uncompromising stand on ethical issues (not to forfeit a person's, group's or human- kind's dignity by accepting People-Thinging or Competition Principles).

(5) supporting depth of emotional and intellectual experience by allowing time and stimulation to study a few issues in depth rather than to amass superficial informative items.

(6) promoting humanistic changes in the community that will affect basic humanistic changes in the school system.

(7) working with the humanistic (explicitly TCI) hypothesis that person (any person), group (any group and we all) and world (all our world) are of equal importance; requiring support in spirit and action.

Chapter 12

WE ARE A PART OF THE UNIVERSE AND PARTICIPATE IN IT: THE GLOBE

Dr. Ruth C. Cohn

What do we mean when we talk about the Globe? At the end of a course on the New Age, Ruth Cohn establishes a connection between personal experience and the consciousness of mankind as a whole.

Every person experiences the universe from his or her own position. This universe, experienced from one's individual position in life, is what I term the "globe."

In this group, a course with the theme "Transitional Times," we came together from different home countries and towns, varying professions and differences in age. The theme of this course had attracted all of us, but the reasons for our decision to attend were not identical. We had different concerns, needs and life experiences. Our motivation and paths in life varied from one person to another.

Our course was coming to an end. It was the next to last day. We had gained a closeness with one another through the theme and through what had occurred during this time. It was now important to me to express briefly the importance of the concept of the globe aspect. I said something like this:

"Please close your eyes and imagine the room we are sitting in and everyone present. We are all together in this room, yet each has a separate place. And each one of us is in the middle of his or her own person.

Imagine, beginning with this middle point within your own person, concentric circles that symbolise the adjacent environment and that farther away. Each of us is in this room, as well as in the infinite universe, our real middle. We are single beings in the cosmos, each with his or her own position (point of view, experience).

And yet we are together at the same place, in Villeret in Switzerland, in Europe, in a conference centre, which possesses its own extensive past over centuries, as a farm, as a clock factory and presently as a house for groups to meet in.

Today is August 15, 1986. It is 4:30 p.m. Before this time - the time according to clocks - lie infinitely many years and afterwards again infinitely many years. But we are in the here and now, in this group together in the same room, creating a common "globe," and yet all individuals carry within themselves a smaller globe of experiences, the centre of their own globe.

The universe that has been experienced throughout the existence of mankind is our globe. Momentarily it is our existence in this time (1986) and space on this planet. Mankind's globe is the cosmos experienced through the centre of mankind. Not one single person with his/her own experiences and points of view can be excluded from the globe of mankind.

The time measure of 1986 and the space measure of the earth

contain all human beings now living. And yet each person has individual points of view which differ from one another because of one's position in place and time, genetical factors and the changing factors which affect the individual.

We are a part of the universe and we participate in it simultaneously. We are participating because of our innate abilities of consciousness and responsibility. The more we are aware of our interdependence, the more we are able to be responsible and independent. It is impossible to picture the universe and yet we are able to capture it in thought. We are also able to sensually perceive it, for instance, looking at or remembering the star-studded heavens, recollecting the sounds and silences of the seas, the view from high mountains, the presence of a new-born child or through a meditative attitude which shuts out our usual consciousness - being conscious of consciousness itself. We can be amazed that we are surrounded by an unending space, through which light is shining on us day and night, knowing that an infinite number of galaxies lie beyond our own. And we also know that the position of a star that we are now seeing has already been abandoned centuries or even millenniums ago.

I am at the centre of my own viewing, of my possibilities of perceiving and of my own thoughts. My consciousness allows me merely "moments of enlightenment." I know that there is more within me and more around me than I am able to be aware of.

I am myself, a part of the universe in which I am participating. The universe is radiating its energy, shining through me and enabling me to realise my part and to contribute through my participation.

Consciously and unconsciously, we are having effects beyond our own selves. The universe is shining into us with its stars and its people, with all living creatures, with their history of the past and of the future; we are a part of the universe and we are participating in it. We are being affected and we have an effect on each other, as well as an effect that extends beyond us personally. Things

are done to us and we do things. We are able to support as well as destroy, since we have been enabled and equipped to do so as human beings.

The number of persons, animals and plants having an effect on us is limitless, including those who are now living (farther away and nearer by) and those who existed before our time in the network of effects of then and there on our here and now. Limitless are also the effects of events to come, whether we are able to determine them in advance or know about them intuitively, or not. We can extend our consciousness of influences and effects, and yet our internal and external consciousness remains spotty.

What we consciously know about the inner, integrated globe and about the here-and-now of experience is much thinner and smaller than the events experienced. We surely possess creative abilities and yet our perceptions, our mind and spirit remain infinitely small upon the backdrop of the universe. Still, the human power of creativity, or rather that of human kind as a whole, is astoundingly huge; human genius appears in the variety and precision of speech, of cultures, of differentiated thought processes and feelings, and of our possibilities to support, maintain and destroy life.

In the 20th century we were able to become more effective as human beings than ever before. We are able to improve the fate of the individual person as well as that of the community at large - improving health and material circumstance immensely. We are able to develop miracles of technology that not only transport our bodies but also our intellectual products from one place to another more quickly and more differentiatedly than ever dreamed of and we are able to destroy nature and precipitate the planet's explosion.

We are able to participate in the universe. We are probably the most highly developed construction in our galaxy. We have the capacity to change circumstances and to deal with them crea-

tively. It is not our lot to decide whether we want to judge things or to cause them to happen or not to happen. We must participate because we are made that way. Individuals as well as communities make judgements and take action. Because they are determined by their community and their culture, the kinds of judgements and actions taken are unique - which can either tend to the promotion of life or to its destruction.

Considering the promotion of life as more desirable than its destruction is a belief, an axiom, not provable according to intellectual standards - rather according to the experiences of life itself. Respect for life and the love of life are inseparable.

Experiencing individuals have differing perspectives. Experiencing individuals have conflicting needs. We are continually in conflict with the needs of others. Only love and loving justice are able to help us to live in these conflicts and to accept them as given. The attraction of projections and identifying enemies might lessen if we were able to counter the lust of death and killing with the joy of living. Just as lies are overcome through the discovery of truth, the selling out of humaneness and life could be countered with the giving in to life and the joy of life.

I am aware that quite a bit has flowed into my writing that I probably didn't actually say. Apparently I gave my "passionate involvement" precedence while writing.

When I requested the participants to reopen their eyes, I drew the globe for them as a many-layered, transparent ball, whose most extreme layer represented eternity. I asked them to assign as many factors as they wished which influence us and which we influence, into this globe with many rings as a model. I became dizzy while writing down all the factors called out to me, because of the quantity and high tempo of the exchange and being aware that we could spend many hours thus collecting "globe items": persons, things, institutions, happenings of all sorts. Items which send waves out from the globe into our room, through all of us

seated here, and upon which we can exert an influence. There are our parents (at different points in our life), our teachers, schools, streets and smells, churches, offices, woods, streams, laws and rules, names, birth certificates, nuclear power stations, official papers, the moon, meadows with flowers, children's beds, names from politics, apple and cherry trees, barbed wire, battle fields, snow landscapes, gene technology, the boss, inflation, those dying, the beloved ones, barracks, poetry and literature from all times, works of art in museums, the plague, AIDS, skyscrapers and clay huts, sailing boats in the bathtub, lists of the winners of the Olympics, machines from the wheel up to the computer, floats and aeroplanes, screams of the tortured, annual fairs, ants, camels, trucks...

The numbers of influences arising from the personal and from the general globe are infinite, just as the influence that we are able to make. Even the smallest measure counts. Just as a beach is created through a neighbourhood of sand particles, it will be possible for us to achieve a neighbourhood based upon the belief in the indeniable value of a social and loving justice, so that we can resist the sell-out of humaneness and life together.

Chapter 13

THE PARTICIPANT LEADER

P. John Britto

This article originally appeared as a chapter in the book "Living Learning" by the author published by "Manitham", Thanjavur/Tamilnadu in Jan. 2001. The practical examples are a special aid in grasping TCI concepts. Some changes have been made in agreement with the author.

The Interview

In a hall where a workshop is being conducted, the whole group has been divided into two small groups. Both groups have been discussing a theme in separate rooms. The course leader was helping one of the groups in clarifying the topic.

Now it was tea time.

A reporter of a leading newspaper arrived at the workshop hall to interview the course leader.

Interviewer (IV): Good evening, Madam! Thank you for the appointment.

Course Leader (CL): Welcome Sir. Shall we start the interview?

IV: Oh, yes, Madam. What do you mean by "workshop"?

CL: A workshop is a place where more doing, reflecting and expressing takes place than 'speaking' and 'hearing'. It is a place for self-discovery. Individuals have come here, form a group to reflect on a theme, based on their experiences. 'Experience matters'. There will be an increase in their knowledge, a change in their attitude and a development in their skills at the end of this workshop. There will be a balance in the input and the output.

IV: What is your role?

CL: I am a course leader.

IV: How are you different from other participants?

CL: I am basically a participant, But a model participant.

IV: What does that mean?

CL: I have my own interests, preferences, thoughts and feelings as any other participant. But at the same time I have the responsibility to make the group remain in contact with the task, which they have defined, and goals that they have set. So I have to be selectively authentic.

IV: Selective authentic. Can you explain it more, Madam?

CL: I have to be tactful in each intervention. I have to see how openness can be practised positively in a group.

IV: How do you achieve this, Madam?

CL: We have a few auxiliary rules.

IV: Such as...

CL: Such as, 'Only one person speaks at a time' or 'If you make comments about the conduct or the character of another participant or of a person present or not present, state additionally what it means to you, that she or he is the way she or he is'.

IV: Interesting. So, you are a special participant are you?

CL: Not exactly. I have a special function of assuming responsibility to establish a 'dynamic balance'.

IV: What do you mean by 'dynamic balance'?

CL: TCI states that the individual, the interaction in the group, the theme and the environment are essentially equal in value. It is a dynamic process. I am comparatively more responsible to insure that each factor is receiving equal attention. I am like a pendulum in the clock. I have to be moving.

IV: That sound nice.....and how about your involvement in the theme, Madam?

CL: I assume the task of establishing, formulating and introducing the theme to the group with the full involvement of the group and their needs.

IV: Oh, does that mean that the group depends on you fully?

CL: No. It is an experience of being neither completely independent nor completely autonomous, rather mutually dependent. You see!

IV: Oh, yes, Madam.....How do you help the group achieve the goal?

CL: As a course leader I take care of creating group structures that may contribute to resolve the task set by the theme. Structuring the group process, selecting what is important.....these all should be in accord with the demands of the situation and the group.

IV: What are your training methodologies?

CL: TCI is an inclusive system. The techniques like lecturing or role-playing are used in the methodologies like the small groups or plenary. The methodologies and looking after time, space and groups are called structuring.

IV: Good. Thank you, Madam. I could see that both the groups have come to the workshop hall.

CL: Yes. After the small group discussion, they have assembled for the plenary.

IV: Thank you very much.

Concept

Every group consisting of more than five or six persons needs one or two group leaders. Experience in working with TCI in groups has shown that if nobody is delegated, standards will begin sinking after a time; because, if everyone is directing their concentration on maintaining the dynamic balance and possibly on other aspects of group leadership, there will be too much energy directed towards the task of leading the group and too little towards the individual's relationship to the group and to theme. If, on the other hand, nobody is a consistent advocate of the dynamic balance or is paying attention to the well-being of the others, the result will be either a loss in group cohesion or a loss in focus on the theme.

First and foremost, however, group leaders are participants, that means, persons with their own interests, preferences, thoughts and feelings, and only secondly are they group leaders with a special function. This function consists primarily in paying attention to the dynamic balance between I and their relationship to the Globe. Directing the awareness towards every "I" means that each individual will be respected. In the long run, the "I" or the "I's" should not become more important than the group interaction, the WE, and neither of these should receive so much attention that the "third aspect", namely the theme, is neglected.

TCI leadership is leading by participating. Structuring the group in time and space, determining the theme, selecting what is important - this all should be in accord with the demands of the situation and the group.

"Dynamic Balancing"

My Reflections

The course leader is not a teacher. She is a learner-teacher. She comes to the workshop hall with an open mind but also with her own homework. She contributes. She takes home new

things. She does not rely on the "prepared" papers alone, but is ready for the "new discoveries", that may arise during the interaction. She brings energy to the group and believes in "synergy" in the process. She takes every discovery of the group as a "state of arrival" in the context of space, time, persons and theme. She sees the group process as a ladder with many steps. The second step of a ladder will not be an "end step", but it is a state of arrival. She does not stay in the second step but travels in search of next steps. She has to be well versed with the message, but need not be an expert. But she has to be an expert with the medium. She is an administrator of learning experiences. Since learning experiences depend on the structures in which the group operates, she needs to be skilled in handling group structures. Because medium matters. In communication theories, they say, "Ground is more important than figure". Here figure is the learning. Ground is the group structure. Learning depends of the structure. The course leader has to be creative in forming the structure and may "improvise" it during the process. She has to maintain the dynamic balance among all the four factors in a group process. She has her own wishes, interests, preferences, thoughts and feelings, as any other participant. But she has to come out of the role of 'participant' and 'see' if she and the group remain in contact with the task in the given context. This 'Coming out' and 'Going in ' in the role of participant has to be so smooth that not only others, but she herself would not notice. Let me spend some time thinking on the coining of the term "dynamic balance". In balancing one needs to be "still". Imagine a man walking on a rope; he needs to be "still" to the maximum and move with extreme concentration and slow speed. When we buy groceries we see the "balance". When both sides are equal it does not move. In being 'dynamic' one needs to move. It has force within. It does not stop anywhere. 'Dynamite' Blasters - it is fast moving with lots of sound. Extremely opposite and contradictory words are united together in "dynamic balance".

You need to be moving and not moving. You need to be at one place but at the same time at all places. The course leader is a combination or a meeting place of contradictory opposites. The course leader is like a tree. The root goes downwards. The stem comes upwards. They travel in extremely opposite directions. But they remain in one "thing". We call it a "tree". Imagine the roots. They are at the soil, going down and they travel to all directions. See the branches. They are at the top, going upwards and they travel in all directions. They *travel* 360 degrees. But it *remains* a tree. The course leader is just like the tree. she seems to remain in one place, but rooting in and branching out to all directions. It looks like it is not moving (growing) but it is moving (growing). The tree grows and gets strengthened by the environment. The tree strengthens the environment, too. The course leader contributes to the group and helps the group grow. The group contributes to the course leader and her growth. The tree inhales carbon dioxide and exhales oxygen. Thus the tree helps in cooling the atmosphere to bring water down as rain. The water enriches the soil. The tree absorbs the richness of the soil. It is a cycle. Does the tree "be" independent on its environment? What depends on what? It is a mutual dependence. The relationship among the course leader, the group, the theme and the globe are mutually dependent.

The course leader helps in formulating the theme. The course leader is one step ahead, having a bird's view of objectives of the workshop. It helps the course leader to establish a 'tentative' theme. It is discussed and formulated democratically in the group. The course leader is ready for changes in the 'tentative' theme, without bypassing the objective of the workshop, accepted by all. Then she takes charge of introducing the theme to the group. TCI group leader is not like 'mothers' who are aware of the needs of their 'children' and spoon-feed them. A TCI group leader is like a friend who 'accompanies' you throughout.

The group leader is aware of rules that help in the effective group process. These rules are based on the postulates and axioms of TCI. The universe is disciplined with a law. The ultimate law. Everything is time. That is the Natural Rhythm. The group leader needs to be rhythmic.

TCI is an inclusive system. The course leader has to look after the structures in the group process. The date/dates of the workshop, the duration, the time table, the space, the group constituency are part of the structures. Weekdays or weekends matter. Summer or winter matter. The dynamics of the three-day workshop is different from the dynamics of the ten-day workshop. What is the time table? When does the programme start? Are tea time, meal times and private time taken into consideration? Are they treated as 'workshop time' or seen as 'outside' of the workshop? Is the venue conducive? Is the group homogeneous or heterogeneous? Is there a balance for individual work, small group work and plenary sessions?

Based on these structures, the following methodologies can be used.

i) Individual reading, reflection and reporting can be encouraged.

ii) Small Group Discussion (SGD) has proved to be very effective in bringing higher participation.

iii) Plenary - The whole group participates as one big group.

iv) Buzz Groups Discussion (BGD) can be formed, consisting of 2-3 people, for a shorter period like 1-2 minutes while remaining in the plenary without moving to another place.

v) Rounds - This provides equal opportunity for each person to express himself/herself.

vi) Open Space Technology (OST). It is a more democratic set-up. Those who would like to lead a group on a separate theme

can write their names, specifying their topics. Those who would like to participate in a discussion of a particular topic will write their names below the course leader. There may be four or five topics. So, the group gets formed by itself. Each group determines its own meeting place, time, duration and other details.

The structure is all-pervasive. Beneath the structure methodologies as listed above can be used - of course, others are possible as long as they are in accord with TCI principles. Within these methodologies different techniques can be followed, such as the following:

1. Lecturing
2. Meditation
3. Brain Storming
4. Role Play
5. Audio Visual Aids
6. Stories
7. Games
8. Exercises

I am not going to deal with each one in detail. A few words about the similarity and the difference between Games and Exercises: Both are group activities. They provide experiential learning. Both demand the higher level participation from those involved. Games involve our instinct to be playful, while exercises do not necessarily do so. Games can have an element of competition while exercises usually do not.

The course leader practices openness in the group. She does not use techniques merely to promote activity. Her attitude and behaviour are her techniques. She does not use tactics in her interaction. She becomes tactful. She throws off her mask of being "special" - rather she lives as a "normal" person in and with the group. The group leader does not "have" a message. The group leader "is" the message.

TCI - AN INCLUSIVE SYSTEM

STRUCTURES
(Time, Space, Time-Table, Group Constituency, Materials, etc.)

METHODOLOGIES
(Individual work, Buzz groups, small groups, plenary, OST etc.)

TECHNIQUES
(Meditation, Lecturing, Brain Storming, Debate, Role play, Story, Audio Visual Aids, Songs, Posters, Games, Exercises etc.)

Chapter 14

I AM LEADING, YOU ARE LEADING - WHO IS LEADING?

The Concept of Leading in TCI

Prof. Dietrich Stollberg

TCI is an anti-authoritarian and grass-roots-democratic model of social interaction and cooperation. Like all other groups, TCI groups require leadership. The question is whether it is necessary that one person exclusively take the role of the leader, including most of the responsibilities and other leadership functions. The author feels that the concept of "shared leadership" realises the meaning of the chairperson postulate consequently. A hierarchy of leader and those being led is authoritarian and inhuman - even in its most subtle and nice looking forms.

I. There's no group without leadership

A common question in TCI groups is: "And who's leading?" The assumption is that someone will always be taking over the leader's role, in the sense of being "the guardian of dynamic balancing." Obviously, and this is sometimes brought up in groups, there is a certain contradiction between this idea and the postulate "Each person is his or her own chairperson."

Unquestionably, no group exists without some sort of active steering mechanism, i.e., a leadership function. However, the possibilities of executing this leadership are varied and lead beyond mere descriptions of leadership styles, since basically social and political attitudes are being expressed. Many styles have labels: for instance, authoritarian, democratic, or laissez-faire. All of them involve a clear distinction between the leader and those being led (participants).

1. Using the authoritarian style of leading, the group leader sets goals and determines what is allowed and what is not. The authoritarian leader permits no contradictions, and acts on the premise that someone is always superior in comparison to the others and that this superiority (in knowledge, abilities and/or power) will be used for the benefit of everyone. This style works on the basis of commanding and obeying and thus has the advantage that decisions can be reached and put into action very quickly, since it is well-known that decision-making processes in groups require much time, if a minority is not to be steam-rollerred by the majority (e.g., through voting). Therefore, many constitutions include limited authoritarian regulations, primarily for the head of the government, for crisis situations. It is quite possible that the model of one leading and all others following can be in the interests of the common welfare. An example of the instruments of power for enforcing authoritarian decisions in politics is the military - also the justice departments and prisons. In schools and training institutions, reports cards and grades are the measures to prevent promotion or graduation or to cause expulsion. The business world operates with severances, lockouts, and transfers for disciplinary reasons and other measures. In social contexts there are rejections, the refusal to communicate or to inform and the denial of solidarity or reciprocal protection. Once introduced and accepted, the authoritarian style of leadership requires no proof and no justification for its consequences.

2. The democratic style of leading attempts to represent the total interests of the group by effecting a consensus in the group regarding goals and purposes. Minorities are sometimes allowed to submit a special vote or report which is to be taken into consideration in further decisions (but often is just "forgotten"). It is the majority which determines who has the leadership function - for instance, through election = voting or the confirmation of a vote per acclamation. In the case of seminars offering training elements in TCI, this election is achieved through a practice of "whoever registers" - meaning that these persons are willing to accept the suggested theme along with the leaders and other conditions. That is, whoever is willing to trust the suggested leaders and invest them with power. The leader acts upon a commission from the group - according to the principle of delegation - thereby reducing the responsibility of others in regard to their own task in leading. In case of doubt, he or she will seek support from the entire group or from the majority or its most influential members (who in turn function de facto as latent leaders or relinquish this back to the official leadership) by soliciting understanding and support for his or her suggestions and intentions. In the worst case, he or she will threaten to give up their positions as leaders, thereby burdening the participants with the leadership role or precipitating a conflict in regard to possible successors. The concept "role" should be understood as containing many important "functions," which may be assumed by one or more persons - this means that there may be differing leadership roles within a group simultaneously, which are realised by assumption or delegation of tasks (functions) by various persons. Rotation of leadership is a variation of the democratic leadership style - in the interest of more equality - for instance, regularly changing the chairperson. Each person then has the opportunity to be the leader - mostly according to a formally expressed plan - thus taking a back seat for the rest of the time and perhaps neglecting the rest of the proceedings, including the voting.

3. The laissez-faire style of leading leaves everything to chance. In such groups there is a kind of leader, but such persons are leading only in the sense that they are representing the necessity for leadership - however, without actually leading actively or intervening decisively. They are often subscribed with considerable power, because their passivity soon releases anxieties and desires, fantasies (for instance, concerning secret intentions), projections and other defence mechanisms, driving the group temporarily into an extreme helplessness. Through activities of individual persons as well as tendentious struggles, the group attempts to overcome the lack of orientation in determining their common goal (theme, project) and in building up an hierarchy among the leadership - that is, an order in positions and procedures (norms for behaviour, content and structure) - thereby filling up the vacuum in leadership. Those who were "leaders" up to this point are often vigorously attacked; it will be demanded that they accept responsibility for the supposed chaos and eventually it will be attempted to oust them, should they refuse to do so (or - as in the case of psychoanalytic encounter groups - the procedures will be interpreted). Psychoanalytic and group dynamic processes use this natural development in order to raise subconscious patterns and fantasies of individuals or of the group as a whole into consciousness in order to deal with them. There is much ground to cover until the group can experience common leadership in partnership.

II. Models of Leading of a "Higher Order"

1. If a group, which has either been led in a laissez-faire manner or has had no leadership at all, is able to maintain enough motivation to stay together and has managed to get through the "worst" stages of dealing with chaos and the search for strikers, and if the will to develop community is strong enough, then the *discussions and clarifications* (on all levels: interests, relationships, emotions, arguments, etc.) will result after some time in either an authoritarian or a democratic styles of leadership, which

will be declared by way of delegation or "per resignation." In the case of resignation, which for example, can be the result of long and tedious debates, the group is ready to accept almost anything, if only someone will take over the leadership and rescue the group from further discussions. A group is all the more likely to surrender their power, the more it has become tired and helpless, thus subjugating themselves to the demands of those with the most endurance in the struggle for leadership. Some persons will neither become leaders nor subjugated, rather remain merely fellow travellers.

2. There is, however, also the possibility that many group members, after working through the tasks at hand together, divide the differing tasks and form *a leadership team.* This team is able to extend its power over the entire group, either through a strong backing (trust, continuous exchange of information, etc.) or is able to increase its influence (because of minimal signs of cooperation in the group) until it is possible to be dealing authoritatively. The leadership team may operate as a "running team," renewing itself according to the concept of rotation. This form occurs often in TCI groups, a thoroughly common form and not yet one of a "higher order."

3. Forms of leading belonging to this category (of a "high order") are those which do not include a number of several constant persons as leaders, but rather those in which a group apparently organises itself without a leader and becomes active in a creative manner. This is not a utopic model, but one that is known in social history, in ethnology and ethology, even in the animal world (cf., for example, communities of insects), and occurs in the modern working world. We call them: "partnership-like," or "sibling-like" in their characteristics. (Personally, I participated in a team over a period of years that achieved this model of leadership gradually and with considerable effort.) Leadership is accomplished without domination, neither patriarchal nor matriarchal. Every member of such a group is conscious of the common goal (theme, task,

project), affirm it and consolidate their efforts that this goal will be achieved. This comes to pass either through a strict assignment of tasks (roles) or spontaneously, according to the situation, necessary factors, needs or competencies. One used to say that individual group members must necessarily be flexible in their roles.

Such highly autonomous teams, which involve all members of the group, are regarded as especially creative and innovative. However, they require much time: for the resolution of their differing interests, for continually renewed goal orientation, for a comprehensive exchange of information (related to the common task), for the resolution of disturbances of individuals in regard to their ability to work on the task (it might involve, for instance, illnesses expressing an implicit danger of being rejected by the group or being uninformed, etc.), for crises in cooperation or trust - also in regard to the on-going task ("We won't make it!"), and for the general resolution of conflicts. In the process, dissension in details must be tolerated, in fact, integrated. However, a consensus in regard to the total goal should be achieved and maintained.

This partnership style in leading makes the following possible for everyone involved: a greater identification with the common project ("corporate identity"), more congruency between one's own and common interests, the assumption of responsibility and, last but not least, personal satisfaction. Delegation is also to be found in such groups (no one can always manage everything alone), but it does not occur once and for all, but from case to case. If the members are tuned in well to one another and if they have practice cooperating with each other, then, according to the situation as well as their own abilities, they will perceive what is necessary and whether they can contribute to a solution of the problem. A capacity for mutual criticism without causing grievances is essential here.

This is referred to as *the grass roots model of shared leadership.* Everyone is mutually leading everyone else, is passing the ball back and forth, and is allowing himself or herself in turn to be

led by the common task or idea, the common goal or theme. The support given by defined roles is inapplicable. Actually, this model is no longer a "style of leading." The fact *that* necessary leadership functions are being performed is important, the question as to *by whom* is secondary.

III. Roles and Functions

1. The strict union of leadership with role is questionable.

For the record: there is no group without leadership! Every group is already following a course, has come together in the pursuit of some task - and is confronted with the need for orientation as to how this goal can be reached (or how the theme can be dealt with). The question is how this orientation should be put into action and where it should be coming from. And in this matter, opinions vary considerably. Since our kindergarten and school years, we have been accustomed to having one or more persons of authority take care of this orientation. Even in TCI courses, it is considered quite natural that the leaders who are proposing a course assume the responsibility for its planning, implementation, and finally even for its results. However, in comparison with traditionally led courses, this is true within TCI only with severe limitations: those participating should be motivated to be involved in the work and should be at least partially involved in the group leading and jointly responsible for results. The group leader is described as a "participating leader". *However, the participant is seldom or never thus described (for instance, as a "leading participant").* This mutuality has not reached a mature stage. That is the theme of this article. For the statement, "There is no group without leadership," is bound to another: "Leadership is not bound to set roles (and thus to the persons possessing these roles)."

2. Functions of Leading

Prerequisite for the above claim is *an exact observation of the functions pertaining to leading which* have been united tra-

ditionally in the concept of the leadership role. Leading functions are absolutely necessary in task-oriented groups, which explains the tension between the two statements, "Leadership, yes" and "Role, no." Which leading and guiding functions can be assessed and which of these the group should necessarily assume, if they have not already been assigned from outside (making the group heteronomous)?

The first of these is *the designation of the goal* (goal, theme, task or project) - as the purpose for the meeting together of the participants - has to be clarified specifically. Much time and possible conflicts later on will be prevented by a precise agreement. In the case of courses announced through a course description, this description serves as the first version, as well as information supplied by the organiser concerning further details about content, proceedings, recommended reading list, materials, etc. Everyone should make preparations in order to be actively involved in leading. In order to reach a clear agreement (contract) among all involved, the course description, which has been formulated one-sidedly up until this time, will need to undergo a process of adaptation with possible changes in order to become the common mental and spiritual possession in the group. The contract, which has been reformulated explicitly or implicitly at the beginning of the group work, will effect the further process in the group. Each and every individual must be able to rely on it, unless modifications (effected unanimously) become necessary.

The orientation function in leading is related to the designation of the goal and the working through of the contract. If neither a person of authority or an irrevocable law which has been prescribed from outside is determining what is to be done and what not or how the process is to be managed, then the group has to reach an understanding about these issues. This function will remain like a continuous thread throughout the entire group process. This includes procuring information about the theme, as well as

sharing it, and also deliberations as to the organisational structure for sections of the work (plenary sessions, small group work: thematic or other perspectives, time plan, distribution of individual tasks; contacts with the globe, for instance, with the house administration or with the organiser, perhaps even with an entire community, etc.). If some of the participants lack pertinent information, they will not be able to express their competency in the group optimally. *Transparency concerning information that is related to the theme* is therefore very important. Additionally, a high level of transparency strengthens *the trust and cohesiveness* in the group. The more matters are settled by only a few behind closed doors, the more mistrust or disinterest will spread.

Special attention should be given by all concerned in dealing with the *disturbances* of individuals (relating to the task or theme) as well as with a constructive resolution of *conflicts*. A central element in the functions of a leader lies in the postulate giving priority to disturbances ("disturbances take precedence").

The function of resolving conflicts is not identical to this - it is rather much broader. Implicit in this function is the basic idea that differences in experiencing and in perceiving possible goals and ways to reach these goals should not be quickly smoothed over because of the felt need for harmony. Rather, their potential in regard to the whole task should be investigated and directed into a synthesis through constructive argumentation, which never loses sight of the common goal. At the same time, encouraging the development of an individual, although differing *point of view,* should be manifest, as well as a climate of mutual *tolerance* in the group, which means, *freedom from sanctions* regarding seeming or obvious errors. Progress will be achieved only through trial and error!

Belonging to a quite different category are the functions of leading which guarantee that the greatest number of levels in human perception and modes of expression are present - cognitive discussion as well as expression of feelings, subject matter as well

as relationships, the history of the individual participants as well as that of the group (which means = its identity). Also, visions of the here and now and of the future and of the globe. *"Guardians of the dynamic balance"* is a goal for all participants in an advanced group, because they have attained somewhat more distancing from the emotional confusions that may arise present in a group. At the same time, through the acting out of their deficits, it is possible for every committed participant to contribute de facto to the establishment of this balancing.

The *external representation of the group* is also a task for those leading - towards the organisers, toward WILL, towards the administration of the conference housing, towards the community at large, etc. It is unacceptable to regard the person with the role of leader (course leader, director, etc.) as the only person who can realise this function. Whoever has been mandated by the group in a particular regard will be able to speak with complete legitimacy. This is often difficult to accept for those outside the group, because they are used to unmistakable representative roles which indeed are more transparent about who is responsible and clearer concerning the persons one is dealing with. As an aid, a nominal "leader" for the "outside world" (sometimes designated as a "speaker") is often designated, who however has no authority to issue orders within the group. Although it would certainly be easy to list others, these examples of the function of leading should suffice.

IV. Teaching Group Leading as a Shared Partnership

The courses in a TCI training program are usually concerned with social learning, i.e., acquiring TCI abilities, and are not centrally devoted to specific topics (which we understand as the application of TCI). The main purpose is realising and practising the dynamic balance of the I in the globe with the aid of structure, process and trust.

It is necessary in groups consisting of beginners to give clear directions, specific rules for behaviour ("Say I instead of one,"

"Avoid questioning...") - i.e., for the courses leader(s) to assume fairly comprehensively the various functions of leading. This is what persons coming from a "thoroughly overly schooled society" (E. Spranger, I. Illich) are accustomed to and it is there that they must be picked up, if they are not to be confronted with incommensurate demands. Progress during a course, or within a TCI training, can be recognised through the phenomenon (among others) that the original designated leader or leaders gradually relinquish the role of leader and step into the background, which means into *one* row with all other members of the group. Those who have assumed the role of leader because they are more experienced in using TCI gradually become members of the group, indistinguishable from the others. The differentiation in degree between teachers and students becomes weaker, the asymmetry caused by roles which have been rigidly determined as helping ones changes gradually into a partnership among equals with equal rights within an organism in which symmetries and asymmetries change rapidly, according to need. Who is helping whom at what time is completely open.

At this point, all decisive steps in the group process will be decided in plenary sessions and no longer behind closed doors and/or worked through in discussions within the leader's team - even if that may be quite tedious at first. Patience, a tolerance for frustration and a mutual commitment to solve problems are necessary to accomplish this. Additionally, the course leader(s), who still exist officially, must have *the courage to make themselves superfluous,* repudiating the role of leading more and more, enduring the consequent aggression - making a case for the assumption of responsibility by *all* participants. Contrary to psychoanalytical groups, there will be no interpretations or prolonged silences - rather, there will be continual and persistent explanations, one's own understanding of situations will be laid open, and information on matters that haven't been covered thoroughly enough will be made available. The focus is not on working through subcon-

scious fantasies and projections, but on the relationship to reality and transparency. In psychoanalytic terms - it's not a matter of regression, but one of working on the level of the (mature) ego. Struggles between and among each other will not be missing. The drifting away of the group into pleasanter and regressive Elysian fields of playfulness, eroticism or even of theorising may be quite refreshing, but should not be allowed for any length of time. The group itself - there is no need for a special person as leader - will provide for the balancing again; someone will raise the call for order and reality in the name of the theme.

At the same time, we need to take into account that groups convene for quite *differing reasons.* A seminar on the university level has a very different task to achieve than, for instance, the concluding seminar in the training for the WILL diploma. In the latter, it is very important that and to what extent, the postulate, "Be your own chairperson," is being seriously and consequently applied. In the former, according to the motto, "We are all organising this seminar together - each of us is responsible for his or her learning results," only some of the functions of leading are assigned to the lecturer, whereas others are absolutely the prerogative of the lecturer, if for no other reason than that there is not sufficient time for a completely alternative working style which would have to be introduced and established. In this case, the working goal here - depending on the theme - lies not in awakening an understanding for the chairperson postulate (or the training of the student's subjective capabilities) and also not any other aspect of social learning. These will become important at the point at which the obsolete academic style of teaching is being improved upon step by step - for the sake of efficiency in dealing with the subject matter. The particular theme of a seminar along with specific aspects of the globe require fully different adaptations of that which has been learned in TCI. Such didactic considerations provide tremendous capital values.

One thing is always true: whoever is striving to relieve others of as much work as possible is actually weakening them. Our

society, which provides so many services, is a deeply manipulative and incapacitating system, which is similar to a spoiling mother who thus binds her children to herself. The question that must be posed in every course or seminar is, "Which personal and professional competencies are already existent among the participants?" Usually, they are more than we would like to admit. Persons often attend TCI seminars who have assembled experience over many years in teaching, in group leading of all kinds - even if they have not been working with TCI. However, many group members will not show their competencies openly, at least not at first - in order to spare themselves becoming the victims of sibling rivalry. A group, however, accomplishes "shared leadership" through the working of sibling rivalry, which is no longer expressed through projections onto a "common enemy," that is, onto the parent figures who have the role as leader. It is again and again necessary to offer encouragement to those assuming temporarily a leading function, for their risking competition and for their daring to take influence. The single measure for evaluation here is the theme, meaning the furthering of the common project. The orientation on the humanistic system of values is a prerequisite. Basically: *A group is made up solely of leaders!* (Incidentally, this makes the use of co-leaders and assistants questionable.)

The decisive question to be put to those undergoing TCI training is whether he or she is willing to practice the required abstinence involved in making one's self superfluous and to forego the regressive projections of being regarded as a guru. They will be able to continue making contributions, but less from the role of the leader or the TCI teacher, rather as an individual among others with ideas, inquiries, varying competencies (possibly for model behaviour or for being aware of feelings and moods), also criticisms, energetic objections, etc., whereby the original role of the leader is not to be misused authoritatively. Disregarding those abilities which have been gained through much effort in TCI (and perhaps other) training may seem an unreasonable demand and

may seem offensive. But that is what is involved if partnership and "humanising" is to replace the manipulative and finally authoritarian relationships between teachers/educators and students/pupils. It should be clear that the way between a beginner's group and a group of advanced practitioners is a long one. The styles of leadership and the possibilities in leading groups which have been reviewed, apply to processes of individuals as well as to entire group - from the stage of infancy until that of assuming responsibility within the framework of what is possible.

Chapter 15

DEMOCRATIC BEHAVIOUR IN TCI GROUPS

A CHALLENGE TO THE "CHAIRPERSON"

Dr. Helga Modesto

The chairperson postulate that is central to TCI is formulated as a democratic attitude and a democratic behaviour. The principle of autonomy means the opportunity to experience one's own autonomous development of personal freedom as an "exciting discovery." Similarly, the principle of interdependence is a challenge to encounter your fellow human beings as other chairpersons in the same authentic way. This effort to achieve well being within oneself as well as simultaneously within the community can be realised in the TCI group in an exemplary way "where the I's and the We discover a maximum of autonomy while fully accepting interdependence as a reality." Thus the TCI group becomes a training ground for "more than democracy" on the way towards siblinghood in solidarity.

As a human being and as my own chairperson I deliberately attempt in my attitude and in my behaviour to do justice to the fact that I am autonomous and interdependent at the same time, doing

so as humanely and as sensitively as possible. That means that I discover, use and extend my areas of freedom as far as they actually exist (and they are usually more extendable that I first believed, although often in other ways), that I am self-directed (in relation to what I really want and decide about, and not to what arouses my momentary desires) and that, proceeding in this fashion, I attain more than I dared to believe. *And:* I do not ignore the reality of my interdependence in what I do - above all, I do not ignore other persons. I take them seriously on the most basic of levels, with all their differences, their otherness, in everything which is confusing for me or which disturbs me. Surely, this is walking a thin line psychologically, since I would like to accept others and take them seriously without relinquishing my convictions, my basic beliefs, my wishes and needs and without standing up for or pressing these convictions, basic beliefs, wishes and needs to such an extent that the others are forced to acquiesce. Is that at all possible? In trying to achieve this attitude, isn't there a danger of just floating around with neither form nor profile in a stagnation that allows neither genuine convictions of one's own nor an open, critical struggle with each other? This danger is a gigantic one. And yet - I have to assume this risk if I am set on applying chairpersonship in my relationships and in my learning to practice democracy. Democracy, governing in a community according to the wishes of the people (in contrast to governing according to the wishes of a single person or of a group of persons, regardless of category), is based on the principle that each person within the community expresses his or her wishes and is leading himself/herself, as well as (co)leading the group as a whole - being chairpersons according to the meaning of the chairpersonship principle of TCI. Because they have to learn (whether or not they are familiar with TCI)

- to be aware of and to know what they want,
- to express what they want,
- to deliberate upon one's own needs as well as those of oth-

ers as a necessary step in making knowledgeable decisions,

- to take the consequences for one's own behaviour, to admit one's failures and errors and to make a new start at times when things are going wrongly,

- to find genuine and acceptable compromises, which are also to be taken seriously in the here and now, even if they are provisional,

- to seek and find one's place in the community (in the group) which is one's own, not allowing oneself to be steered by ambitions for power, but by striving for one's own as well as the common well- being simultaneously, because they are inseparable.

Since there is no such thing as an ideal or perfect chairperson, we are all caught up in a process (perhaps directed towards this ideal), and thus there is no such thing as the ideal or perfect TCI group, nor an ideal or perfect democracy. But there are TCI groups which operate astoundingly maturely and humanely (as a gathering of chairpersons who are in relationship to one another and working on a common task), thereby practising democracy (of course, within very small "communities" which are often not particularly burdened by outside factors) to an extent which I (for I have experienced this many times) never thought possible. Naturally, an effort on my part is necessary - as participant and as leader - if this experience is to become accessible to myself and also to the group. Specifically, this means that to exercise my chairpersonship, I not only have to want this but also behave accordingly and authentically. Accepting other persons unconditionally and seriously will not occur if it remains in the realm of my merely wanting it. I must treat the other person (who will immediately notice this) as a chairperson - in a consequential and authentic manner. Should that person not or not quite yet be aware of this, then I have to provide the space necessary for him or her to become so. My expectation, which is based on my conviction that this sort of growth possible, is that each person can actually become his or her own chair-

person. The limits to the space which I a lot to the other person (and this is true both for the leader and participants in the group) needs to be set so that sufficient but not too much protection can be felt. The name of this space is trust. And will be accepted as such by others only when I myself am trusting. *And:* at the same time this space has to be large enough to allow persons to seek and find their own paths, their own growth and their own guidelines within it - their own guiding thoughts and experiences through which they will become more and more autonomous and capable of doing justice to their interdependence. The name we can give this space is: trusting others and allowing them freedom.

If I consciously practice this attitude as group leader or as participant with conviction and joy, then I can sense and experience what democracy really is. More than a mere form of government, it is connected with the most profound depths of human existence. For the formation and activating of mankind's essential potential, it is the most fitting form of living together - presenting, however, the chairpersonship of the individual with high demands. Summing up: democracy is being realised in TCI groups in which each individual is fairly successful *in being his or her own chairperson in the group* (= not just "I," but "I in the group") - within a small framework but nonetheless real, actual and accessible to experience (not theoretical, not idealistic, not just a concept). Practice shows that this experience is impressive for all concerned.

Good, and what now?

I am not imagining that democracy can be introduced in this fashion in our institutions, in our communities that called themselves democratic.

Speaking for myself (and for whom else could I be speaking), I can describe my attempt as follows: I want to try to live and conduct myself accordingly wherever I may happen to be, and I hope that reality will reflect this effort with results spreading in many directions. However, a control through evaluation is not my

issue. I am experiencing and will be experiencing some of the results, and I am glad of that. It is also good to assume that there are results of which I will have no knowledge. Some things I would like to leave to coincidence and simply trust in the power of human nature that is being effective in its presence everywhere.

Certainly there is one aspect that, although mentioned, has been too little emphasised and discussed. When I, as my own chairperson, am trying to take others seriously as their own chairpersons, what am I like (not theoretically, but practically and specifically) with my weaknesses, unconscious difficulties, transfer and countertransfer patterns, emotions and aggressions? What am I like when experiencing frustration and conflict in the group, as well as the crossfire of feelings (my own feelings and the feelings of others), which renders me helpless and angry...?

That is the actual decisive point underlying all human action, all teaching, counselling, healing, helping. Everyone meets up with their limitations at this point - this is where the flood of rationalisations, excuses, explanations (clever, less clever, adroit, plausible), disguised cowardice, one's own fears and helplessness (trimmed aesthetically and ethically), the desire for recognition and attention (which dictates all behaviour) one's own vulnerability and the menaces I have to adjust to in order to remain alive.

Enough of making lists - everyone knows what it's about.

There are no recipes to follow. I can only report about myself and my attempts and about what experience has taught me.

- I have decided to make an effort to avoid making illusions about myself,

- as often as possible I confront myself with the fact that I am good or very good at some things, satisfactory at others, bad at some and totally without talent at some and I practice admitting this to myself, whatever the case and observing myself as to how I can take this,

• whenever called for, I remind myself of the fact that I will never be able to please everyone and that there are, and always will be, persons who do not understand me or who do not want to associate with me and I manage internally to allow these persons to remain the way they are,

• I remind myself again and again that I am unique and valuable and I can be at ease with this fact, as well as with the corresponding experience that as long as I reached out with my hands and opened my mouth, thus establishing a relationship, I was never completely left alone or shut out,

• often I force into my awareness: yes, I do really want to take myself and others seriously and practice democracy. And:

• I call to mind the marvellous experiences which I have already made and which cannot be denied nor wiped out, because they have occurred and have become reality and history and therefore also "authority" for me (reality is authority!)

Beyond Democracy: Partnership, Siblinghood

Hierarchical notions of "above" and "below" are unnecessary in TCI.

Because of the fact that participants are taking themselves and the others in the group seriously and are demonstrating mutual respect and because the TCI leader's status is that of the "model participant" (who does not have a special status, but is assuming a function - as a service to the group, as well as an opportunity for himself or herself), persons in a TCI group tend to become close openly and without hesitation. From my own experience I know that they are mutually experiencing each other as fellow human beings who are seeking and doing something in common, who are not under pressure to have to be competing or to be ostensible and who therefore have the space and time to be asking themselves (aside from what they are learning individually or from others in the group) about how they are dealing with themselves and

others in their everyday life and what changes might be called for. The unusual style of behaviour in TCI groups lies therefore beyond the "rules" of democracy and is better termed a style of partnership or siblinghood. We have discussed this issue in several TCI groups and have discovered several factors:

1. Democracy rules by the majority. This is not the intention of TCI. TCI is against the suppression of minorities through a majority vote. Undeniably, it will not be possible to eliminate voting in TCI groups entirely. The severity of this procedure can be lessened, however, by accepting and taking seriously the arguments and concerns of each and every other person and by searching for humane and acceptable compromises through which minorities can at least feel that they are taken seriously, and by making the reasons for and against as well as the reasons for the decisions transparent for everyone. Differences in positions and needs may be clearly stated in a TCI group. During the process, it is possible to make clear and experienciable that a person "gives in" one time and that the next time someone else "gives in" - that is, each has given in a little bit. Also, that the needs of as many as possible will be considered during the course of working together. In an atmosphere of solidarity, which generally develops during TCI group work, it is easier for participants to defer their wishes, knowing that they are accepted and will not be suppressed or rejected by a favoured class which has the say. As a result, they will more readily devote themselves to concerns which are not their own and to learn from them - perhaps making surprising experiences along the way.

In the TCI group the element of partnership in a behaviour that goes beyond democracy consists of the following:

a) I am aware of my wishes and needs, they are important to me *and* I try to accommodate others and their needs and I am open to their accommodating mine.

b) I take care and am trusting that I am able to present my own

interests and that they will be accepted and dealt with and I am open for the interests of others.

c) I am flexible and open for the fact that I will be learning something from the needs or concerns of others.

2. Democracy - taken strictly - means the equality of everyone. Speaking comprehensively, that would mean that everyone would always be determining everything. Everyone is equal with everyone else. Hierarchical divergences would have to be levelled in order to achieve this. This sort of "equality" envelopes a group of human beings like an iron shell, destroying the living growth of the individual, producing distrust, corruption, egoism, deceit, exploitation - demoralising and dehumanising along the way. The chairperson postulate, central in TCI, provides essential protection against these extreme consequences of levelling. If I am taking each person seriously in his or her individuality and uniqueness, the result is that each person is different, not the same (=equal). Every person possesses differing capabilities, strengths, limitations and weaknesses. Thus, one person can accomplish one thing and another something else, according to their talents and abilities. But: no one is "somewhat better" than the other, no one stands higher, even if that person is doing something different. Even if some persons in a group appear to be outstanding because of their intelligence, personality, knowledge, competency in a special area, work experience or life experience, the awareness of differences and of our being dependent upon each other could and should finally prevent extreme aggression and rivalries, so that partners and siblings - despite the fighting and scuffling common to siblings - still remain brothers and sisters.

3. Finally, TCI concepts make possible an attitude which extends beyond that of most democratic ones (this was clarified in points 1 and 2), especially if this attitude has become internalised - a "change in sentiments," a change of mind, reorientation away from the mutually mistrustful lying in wait on each other toward

being independent of what others are doing and towards trusting myself and others. The more explicitly matters are concerned with power, the more difficult (if not impossible) such a "transformation" becomes. (Politics and the business world are remote from this.) Yet, there are groups within which such things are possible, not just in TCI seminars, and the phenomenon that we admire in Brazilian church communities on the grass roots level is to be found here and there in our realms. Some of the accomplishments of "liberation theology" show similarities to basic TCI concepts: "Without our having agreed in advance, we declared 'particpação e communhao,' which means 'achieving the unity of community through participation,' as our method, which has also been declared the goal of contemporary and future pastoral theology in Latin America. A new epoch has thus begun...the people are now to take their history into their own hands."

Being able "to take their history into their own hands" requires considerable freedom and a social maturity in the people and is "beyond democracy" in the direction of partnership and siblinghood. Wherever human beings gather together humanely to learn or practice their beliefs in a living fashion, we will remain more or less remote from realising these ideas. At the same time, there are many onsets in this direction, often astounding ones. Basically, this is the model or ideal form of the TCI group, in which the I's and the We reach a maximum of autonomy while accepting interdependence as a reality.

"Democratic" Attitudes as I Have Experienced

1. Behaving and acting with one another as partners is difficult and unfamiliar; it can be learned through practice.

At the beginning, the TCI group provides the practising ground on which the identified "democratic components" can be realised. Here partnership is to be lived consciously. Here things can be tried out and reflected upon. What has been experienced and learned will start to appear in the working and living together of

the participants; normally beginning with trials which gradually become clearer and more transparent. It is also possible to be learning in the direction of more "democracy" in ordinary life situations, similar to experiences in the TCI group. I am able to act positively in developing democratic behaviour in the TCI group and also in transferring this behaviour into my life at home and at work.

There is often a sense of inquisitive and cheerful expectation in TCI groups, especially when at least some of the participants are more or less familiar with TCI and therefore are anticipating a sympathetic atmosphere in working together. At the same time, however, there will be shyness about the real beginning, a hesitating, and sometimes even a resisting. I have been told more than once (and mostly not as directly as I am stating it here), "You know how one practices partnership - now tell us about it and we will listen," or, "Show us exercises which demonstrate it," or, "Let us discuss the successes and failures which we - you and I - have already had and reflect upon what we might do, if..." These suggestions sound good at first, and it took me a while until I discovered a way to deal with such demands:

I do not like to *tell about* or give a talk on how partnership can be practised - I would like to *practice* partnership with you. Of course, we can reflect on our own experiences together.

I do not like to suggest or demonstrate just any sort of exercise which has little or no relationship to what is going on in the group in the here and now. I do not want to demonstrate something that at the moment has no relevance.

And I do not want us to be merely exchanging stories about how experiences (positive and negative) in which democratic behaviour or partnership succeeded or failed at some other time and/or place or even attempting to work up recipes about "what one can do when..." or "...in order to..." and distributing them. Both of these clarify little and are not helpful.

Just the same, the human concerns that almost all of us sense in groups are urgent and insisting and are to be taken very seriously. Therefore, we must all of us (not just me alone or only the leadership team) seek ways of experiencing things together in the here and now which will aid us in discovering attitudes and ways of behaving in order to (re)gain our course.

Being reluctant to commit oneself, to exert effort or to become embarrassed, to assume the consequences decision-making (being involved in decision-making is desirable, being held responsible for decisions is feared), fear of rejection and the fear of obligations (it is pleasanter to remain noncommittal) - all these cause participants to hesitate in engaging in activities they actually want - those of working together, making decisions together and organising together. Most remarkable to me is that my decisive "no" to the request to "finally contribute something" (actually I am constantly contributing something - everything I am and can do, my experiences and my suggestions and my willingness to work together...) will lead, after an initial frustration, to dispersing the illusion under which many were suffering when they thought that they could get acquainted with a method of "living teaching and learning" whose application will automatically "produce" animation and solidly shared fellowship. This requires patience, endurance and a basically positive mental attitude towards one's co-participants and towards the cause entailed in the common task. And it requires the attempt to comprehend the process of the group work attentively and meticulously in regard to what the group needs to be alive and vital and growing. This kind of attentiveness and patience always pays off, even if the process is trying and lengthy in time.

2. Democratic Freedom in Partnership

Practising democratic freedom in partnership continually calls for personal decision and responsibility. It is important, therefore, for persons desiring to live and work accordingly to be able to

perceive and realise their own freedom. Within the framework of a TCI group, which can be surveyed at a glance, this type of deliberate learning occurs so to speak "in slow motion" (that is, it can occur for those who want it). Here it is possible for each person to decide consciously in matters of doing and not doing, doing things one way and doing them another way, committing oneself and remaining non-committal, being close to others and being more at a distance, being attentive about oneself and/or about others. And each person can consciously take the consequences resulting from these decisions and also collect his or her own experiences about what it is like when there is no compulsion, and realise that it is often irritating that no one else except one's own self can be made responsible for one's own behaviour. It is also possible to realise that everyone in the group (just as in work and home situations) has a certain amount of free space over which he or she alone can decide (should she or he wish to). This space cannot be decided over by anyone else. This space is larger than imagined.

I consider it my task as a TCI leader to make spaces for freedom - the structuring of which allows democracy and partnership to develop - perceivable and to issue the invitation to participants to make use of them. My behaviour is the crucial factor, not discussions or explanations.

Thus I am revealing to others their own space for freedom. But I do not enter it (even if the other person wants me to do so). And I take care that no one else enters it, either. This is the only way in which partnership can develop and custodianship can be avoided. And only in this way can a small model of "democracy" be developed in the group - then, if appropriate, I can clarify the process afterwards.

It is possible to experience this freedom in determining the content of one's own space as an exciting discovery. It no longer seems so very important that human freedom is not absolute and unlimited, but limited by and dependent on many factors and proc-

esses. One's own space for freedom is large enough and the choices for using it so myriad that there is enough to do, if our accomplishments are to be conscious and differentiated.

Finally, we can experience that things that we do out of our own free will and that we do gladly are usually things in which we will be successful. If we succeed in something, the pleasure in the experience of succeeding encourages us to discover and integrate further capabilities in ourselves - and this leads to a richer and more gratifying life, personally and in common with our fellow human beings.

3. Tolerance as a Reality and a Responsibility in TCI

Tolerance is an attitude, not an activity. It is that attitude through which I basically accept and respect another human being merely because he or she is human and therefore valuable - even in situations in which I disagree or reject the things he or she is thinking, suggesting, representing or doing. I can say and express what I am thinking and feeling - and I should do so. However, that does not have to be a reason to distance myself completely from the other person or to declare him or her my enemy or to fight against him or her. Just as little as it means that I have to give up, hold myself back or resign or that I have to change my views and attitudes. I really would like to "live and let live" with others, neither coming too close nor remaining at too much a distance *and* I want to be outspokenly honest - I want to think, act and be just as I am (= letting myself "live and let live," too).

It is often difficult to believe that something like this can be possible, and therefore the attempt is not even made. In cases where persons do not understand one another or when they carry mutual grudges, there are usually two (extreme) possibilities. Either animosity, hostility, fighting (open or hidden), condemnation and destruction - as a matter of self-assertion. Or withdrawal, resignation, giving up, giving in (with or without sensible arguments) - as a matter of self-punishment.

It is beneficial in group work (and also in daily and professional life) to be discovering, living and practising tolerance intentionally - not as a washed-out wanting-to-please-everyone, not as a tactful or cowardly evasiveness and not as a well-disguised keeping-out-of things, also not the conflict shyness shown by ignoring dissension. This is what is meant by following the TCI requirement to be responsibly leading oneself and to be using one's own thinking and feeling to be in contact with others and thus speaking of one's own specific experiences instead of judging others.

It is already a considerable accomplishment to be aware that being angry with a person is not the same as totally rejecting that person. My obligation is to express my anger in a way that this attitude is clear, and my obligation is also to not feel totally rejected, should someone be expressing his or her anger towards myself.

Partnership *is* possible in a pluralistic group (and that is the reason why this can be an excellent learning opportunity for the realities in everyday life). Pluralism as disparity in opinions and attitudes, in life styles and subjective values, is an essential element of democracy and its touchstone at the same time! In my experience, the TCI attitude that is lived as a conviction leads to a democratic attitude in partnership, even in very inhomogeneous and pluralistic groups. With the stipulation that there is at least a minimum of willingness. Which goes to show that attempting to practice democratic partnership and siblinghood in TCI groups and attempting to initiate and realise them in everyday life through TCI will have a chance at succeeding only if individuals who are decisive and act responsibly (= chairpersons) deliberately decide to place their commitment in this direction.

Chapter 16

THE BEYOND WITHIN

Dr. Ruth C. Cohn

As I am sitting down, a straw-hat on top of my hair, sun-glasses on my nose, with paper and pen in my hands, my senses are filled with the sight of green snow-capped mountains, the soft sounds of cow-bells, the pure smells of hay and the soothing strokes of cooling winds.

A few minutes ago, I was lying on my back meditating on the carpet-covered balcony outside my hotel room (I am high up in the Alps on my workshop tour through German speaking countries of Europe). I got up from my meditating when I received the message from within. The message was to write this paper.

I meditate my own way; a way that may be called: to pray to the Beyond Within. I use my own "mantra." My mantra is not a sound which will remove though or feeling from consciousness in order to find the eternal sounds or waves of Transcendence Within but a challenge to centre myself into consciousness of the central meaning of my specific Here-and-Now. This centring contains the experiential certainty of being in the Awareness of Transcendence. This awareness has the cosmic quality of being in partnership with the universe and may religiously be expressed as: "Hallowed be Thy Will," or:

From the unmanifest all manifestations
Come forth at the coming of (Brahman's) day,
And dissolve at the coming of night.
In that same one, known as the unmanifest.
But higher than that is another state of being,
Unmanifest, (higher) than (that) unmanifest, eternal,
Which when all beings
Perish, perishes not.
(This) unmanifest is called the indestructible;
It they call the highest goal,
Attaining which they return not;
That is My highest station.
The Bhagavad Gita / Chapter VIII

My mantra is "What is central in me now?" The concentration remains in these words - letting other thoughts or sensations or perceptions pass by as a matter of no concern. "What is essential?"

Then, awareness travels for a while up and down my body and the flowing breath - in and out. This awareness leads into relaxing. Then relaxing becomes automatic. The words "What is essential now?" go on for a while and may disappear into sleeping or into the conscious certainty of what the essential is - be it walking or speaking to someone or taking care of this or that or just being still.

Whenever I concentrate on this core of myself with the question "What is my centre now?" I live toward clarity of sensual awareness. Then the senses fade into the background and all seems quiet, and it seems to me that in this stillness intuition, knowledge and faith do their work and come up with the totality of a right answer. This one answer then releases me out of the throes of things and demands. The essential transcends - sometimes experienced as lightness in light.

This morning I had felt scattered. I was in doubt whether I wanted to write, take care of correspondence, be with friends,

pick flowers, climb up into the glory of alpine roses, or just rest on the balcony. (I scheduled my time too closely; my free hours are very few.) Then I meditated. The answer came clearly: "I want to write for Voices, *Transpersonal Psychotherapy* issue," as the Transcendence Within has been my private topic for about half a year.

It happened during my stay in a German hotel where I recovered from a flu last Christmas and fought a 36 hour battle of writing a poem. It was my first poem in my native German language in twenty-five years. This poem Entwurzelte Weihnacht ("Uprooted Christmas") guided me via the Kristallnacht (Crystal night - symbol of the extermination of Jews) into areas of myself that I had not known about. They were the Unfinished Business of anti-German prejudice derived from the evil of the Nazi holocaust. This poem led me to something else which was even more important than its content: I was reclaiming my own language - the language of first sounds, first loves, first songs, first writings and readings and my childhood's certainty that I would be - or even was - a poetess. I had cut this part out of my being from myself when Hitler's doors slammed shut. I had turned my ears away from German sounds around me and even more radically so, had killed them - or so I believed - within my soul.

When this poem happened to me it broke open a tunnel between my German-language-childhood and my American-English adulthood. All these years there had been two of me. One whose associations were the German child, and one whose inside connections lived as an English-American adult. Never the twain could meet. They were like two streams coming from the same centre, yet running parallel to each other. cutting their strength into halves. Then my own private Berlin Wall between these two Me's, built by fear and prejudice, broke down.

It was then that I found myself entering a new phase of life. It was signified by an ease of making major practical decisions and a re-awakening interest in religious questions. I had been a pantheist when I was young. God-in-All seemed self- evident; no use to

ponder about it. This faith fit my thoughts. Now, quite suddenly, God-in-relation-to-who-I-am became an important issue again. I looked for foundations of faith as a matter of living-learning and not of computed ware in dead storage.

Something else promoted my search for the Beyond Within. Several of my closest friends had died within two years. I myself approach the threshold of ageing. Thoughts of being ill and in pain occurred. This seemed realistic. Yet I became aware of always having felt totally impotent when I was ill. Was this realistic, too? Was being ill or in pain really the end of all potency? Were my hands really unable to stroke in love, and was my mind obsolete with the onset of any kind of illness? Was I useless to myself and others at such times? Once, about ten years ago, when I was ill and in bed with pain I started to write poetry - my first and only poems in English. I told myself then that life-in-pain was still worth living as long as I was able to write about living-even-in-pain, and thus be meaningfully in touch with others.

My fear of being ill had to do with living alone - and being ill means living alone in one's pain even if there are others around.

How could I find support within myself if I were ill again - how could I alleviate my own suffering and my feeling of impotence? If my stomach hurt could my hands still be well enough to act toward this pain as a mother's hands would? Did not all healers rely on healing rays emanating from their hands and souls? If I could use and not only do lip service to pantheism, would not Godliness live within me and within my hands as well? Could I not practice Awareness of my own inner Godliness, fill up my conscious Self with the healing and creative spirit of the universe? Could I turn myself against the ill and the pain and the destructive - the Unholy, the Burden? (Or practice to accept that which I could not change?)

And so I started to practice consciousness of the Beyond within me. I held still to search for and receive transcendent sensations and feelings that welled up and calmed down within me. And I sought

awareness of the anti-healing forces as well as the healing ones: anguish, impatience, pain and ugly moods. I concentrated on my healing hands put upon my pain and on my healing feelings being sent to understand, live through and overcome sensations of illness and destructive thoughts. Speaking to the God within me, I could trust myself in very different ways than I could ever trust myself before.

If you were to say: "How do you know about Transcendence Within? How do you know you are not just caught up in ordinary auto-suggestion?" I would say:

I know this as I know anything else. I know with the doubt of a believer. I know that the air around me is cool and the mountains white and that the birds' wings and songs fly in and out of my heart's floating awareness. My *senses* tell sensuals of colour, light, sound, smell, warmth, crispness. My *intuition and knowledge* weave words and concepts into patterns that make sense out of the sensuals. I would not know they are birds if I did not believe my senses and my thoughts and other people's teachings. I would not enjoy the sounds of the waterfall above me if I did not trust my senses and the "knowledge" that these sounds do not signify war planes over my heard.

What I want to say is this: *only the fusing power of knowledge and intuition bring sense into sensuals; only the binding power of faith brings meaning into sensual and intellectual data. Is knowledge really as safe as scientists think or faith as insecure as the "knowers" assert?* (Einstein knew that scientific facts are relative to the observer and that science remains senseless without faith in Sense - in Meaning.)

Many faithful people believed long ago that mankind would perish because of its sinfulness; our scientists (or were they pseudo-scientists?) laughed about such prediction. Now the "knowers" start to believe that the earth may die because of our carelessness (equalling sin). The early believers "knew" by faith - not by knowledge - that killing others means total destruction. Now we know

details of final death: phosphates in oceans, feeding poisons to soil, air, water and chemicals to sun-and-earth-deprived plants and animals, and nuclear splitting of our globe. The poets and prophets in their beliefs were earlier to recognise where mankind chose to go than their scientific computing brothers who were blind to our Transcendental Bonding do.

As I am writing these words my senses are filled with the beauty of a paradisical landscape. Yet, where my heartbeats I hurt: I am at the tail end of a workshop; it was a workshop for therapists and some teachers, different from any other I have ever given. It opened up the wounds of mankind to me as under a giant microscope. Still acutely aware of this experience, the sky and mountain fresco, the colourful fields and forests, the singing and sounding of water, bees, and cow-bells pass through my senses into the cold knowledge that all this beauty is but a thin veneer, barely covering the pending doom of the earth's final collapse. It needs faith beyond the immediacy of senses to believe that the world clock is close to strike doom unless . . .

Sitting on this balcony, sensually drinking into me the blessings of these beautiful and quiet mountains, I am thinking about the furies of the past and the forecast of this earth's dying future; or is there still time for prevention?

This is my 4th year of my part-time working in Europe - mostly with German people. Never have I heard as much about the horrors of Nazism and war as this summer. The participants were people in their forties to fifties, working for and with people as psychotherapists and educators. Almost all of them had been in previous workshops with me. Yet never, neither in their previous analyses and therapies nor in my workshops, had such eruption of the misery of the 1930's and 40's occurred - and never so much *healing* in process.

I put my arms around former Nazis and Nazi-victims. I held in my lap the head of a war-blinded man. I put my hands on the heart of a woman who had been tortured by Allied soldiers who mistook her jacket for that of an SS-man's widow. I listened to

the incredible credibles of Jewish concentration camp victims. I trembled hearing in my mind the gun shots which put a little German child wantonly to death in his mother's arms - with no bullets but ridicule aimed at herself.

People spoke whose consciences had been torn apart when they passed by their Jewish friends to save their own lives (what would I have done in their stead, knowing that nodding to friends may have meant disaster for myself or my children?). Other group members' parents had sacrificed their own children's safety for their political or religious beliefs; they had hated and never forgiven their parents for endangering their own and their children's lives for their religious or ethical beliefs.

Almost all of the group members had lost part of their families by bombs, by execution (through Nazis or subsequent avenging trials), in battlefields or on long roads toward the various ways of dying or being killed in German or Allied camps. They were the surviving parents of raped and murdered children, Jewish ones and German ones, and their avengers.

In this workshop sorrow and furore of the past fused with the same and worry about today's Vietnam, Biafra, the Bahinis, our own school systems, the neglect of the poor and the cruelty of man to man and to animals and plants and our planet.

Since 1969 I have given very many training workshops with German people. Why had there never been such revelation of horrors of the past or expressions of political concern? It could be that this fact was nothing but chance; I do believe, however, that there were discernible causes:

1. The combination of psychotherapists and politically involved teachers and theologians.

2. The fact that there were changes within me. They had occurred through writing the poem that had healed my schizo-German-American-split; and through my arriving at a new level of

religious awareness.

3. And the fact that I used a new and radical way of combining Gestalt and experiential therapy with theme-centred interaction. Themes such as "Ecology - how do I want to help?" created ambivalent waves between "too little" or "too much"; it culminated in one participant's becoming the exponent of the group's concerns. I worked with him with Gestalt Therapy in depth. This intensive work based on an interactional group process touched the group members more than would have happened if I had been "available to work" with individual volunteers, ready for "the hot seat."

Such group experience then propelled us into further themes of everybody's concern. (In the above example the theme "Ecology" led the group into various expressions of wanting to help, yet fearing individually the "too much" - as everybody has so many other commitments.) After one group member had worked through the "taking on too little or too much" problem, other group members shook off the omnipotence of having to do it all as well as the impotence of doing nothing; the group as a whole came to accept the partial potency of human beings - each one of us being committed to do something. We then knew more deeply that only universal cooperation and organisation could save us - each one of us being co-responsible.

I believe that it is faith beyond our senses that says that we are responsible for saving this earth which has nourished us to live; I cannot sense this with my senses nor know it with my knowledge; I *need* not care whether the world will be or how it will be after my death. Yet I do care (as I believe you). I believe that it is faith in interpersonal and intercosmic transcendence when we do not flee into our own comfort, because we are creative partners of this creation. My thinking responds to my faith and says that we, mankind, must change in two ways:

1. To raise children and ourselves psychologically to be respectful of life and to divide what is needed between all people and all living things. (This is the job of all therapies and all educational humanistic endeavours.)

2. To politically organise humanity into one global system in which such upbringing into loving and respecting adults can and will be done. Each time someone pleads for Respect for Life the one who says it gains strength. Others who hear it may, too.

Is it then really less irrational to believe that I am a split-off chance-particle of the universe, not transcendentally responsive to and responsible for what happens than to believe that I am a participant creator and creature of this universe? Is it really more rational to believe that I am nothing but a bundle of reflexes put together by senseless incidents, measurable in stimuli and responses, than to believe in Meaning? *Is believing in "No-Sense" more rational than to believe in Sense?* And is not looking down on "unscientific" faith also based on a (non-substantiated) belief that there cannot be Transcendence of Universal Partnership? This in the face of the fact that meaning is known to us persons, who are causing meaningful acts! Is it reasonable to believe that only people are endowed to give meaning?

I see, I hear, I smell, I sense warmth, coolness and balance. Thinking, intuiting, knowing weave from given sensual threads the fabric of meaning. I have faith that what I sense and think and know has transcendental Meaning as I believe to transcend from being a *part* to being a *partner* of the universe. I believe that the 19th and 20th centuries' science was pseudo-scientific inasmuch as it excluded subjectivity and its transcendence toward universal partnership as possibly having validity; it denied without proof the possibility of Meaning Within Beyond despite the testimonies of almost all significant as well as ordinary people in history. (With this exclusion science itself could be labelled "superstition.")

I am content to believe that I find myself with these thoughts in the good company of such rational people as Goethe, Spinoza, Siddartha Gautama and (maybe) Einstein. They all believed that suns and moons and animals and people and planets and cells and atoms and space connect and have innate meaning; and that all I's

and not-yet-I's and (maybe) super-I's are in the continuous process of being created in and creating this world.

Often, when I meditate, I encounter pain or my own disbelief or overcrowding thoughts - all of which may be called evil or the devil or resistance, according to the choice of one's faith. Awareness, however, of such negatives seems to me in itself a constructive tool.

Sometimes when I am sure what I, as a personal self, want or need most, and when I am in conflict with beyond-me-tasks, I meditate around my Here-and-Now-question of "What is central now?" Making both sides progressively clearer, answers to the conflicting question seem to arise without further effort. This experience of conflict resolution was called by Fritz Perls "organismic change." Yet, in my way of meditation (which may be praying), there seems to be an added element: such organismic change to me appears to be an answer reflecting Transcendental Bonding in which organismic change speaks with the clarity of self-asserting and self-transcending Meaning which I, as a pantheist, like to call the God within.

Prayer Within

Let me continue being alive, being given, giving.
Let me not forget about the horror of pain and unhappiness
while I am filled with the door of the blossoming earth -
Let me be kind.
Let me use my days fully.
Let me know the ground and the heavens and be a walking tree.
Let me spill my love into the atoms around me so they
will grow in the eternal rhythm of light.
Let me be stilled to feed me to the starving and not forget.
And let me remember the evil of starvation within myself.

Dr. Ruth C. Cohn

Part IV

PUTTING TCI INTO PRACTICE

Chapter 17

I MUST DO WHAT I WANT TO
(For Ten Minutes)

Dr. Ruth C. Cohn

I want to write about this game in the style I play it.

I am sitting at a pond. Water noisily like ocean waves swirling into the pond drain. I want to write what I want to, in the style I want. I am going along with whatever comes to my mind that fits into what I want to tell you about this game.

I have a choice. I can write this in formal style. Or I can write this in my game-style, choosing from my associations so that they say what I want to in a way that you who read it are likely to understand what I want you to know.

I would like you to go along with me, for the time it will take you to read this, on minimum trust - that reading this strangely styled paper may tell you something which I believe to be an important contribution to living; it has been for me and for a number of my friends and patients.

It is a game of ten minutes time which, when played repetitively, is likely to spill over, in some essential way, into days and years.

The Rules of this Self-Therapy Game: I call it a game because it has definite rules in time and space; and I'm using the word "game" only in this technical sense - it is a piece of time and space, used by me - any me - in a meaningful way.

The Frame: I must be alone in a room, preferably my own, in which I will not have to consider others or be disturbed by them.

Activity: For ten minutes, I must do what I want to. I must check at every moment what I am doing (including body and mental activity and whether I am *really* still doing what I want to and, if not, change to what I want to do.

Comments: The rule is not I must do what I *feel* like doing, but what I *want* to do. What I "want to" includes my judgement as well as my impulses; i.e., if I feel like smashing an object, I must check whether I want to follow the impulse which I know will destroy this object, then check whether I would rather vent my feeling now and not have this object thereafter, or whether I would sufficiently enjoy smashing it to take the loss of the object in my stride.

In my checking it is important to include the awareness of messages from my body. I might have a fantasy that I want to dance, but my body may signal that I am tired now and what I really want to is to have a fantasy of dancing. The opposite may be true; I might think dancing is silly, but my body may want to dance. I then have to make a decision: Which is it that I want? And the decision may come effortlessly by itself, within a few seconds, or a third idea may pop up and ring the bell of "this is it!"

Many people's reaction to the suggestion of this game has been "But I do this all the time." This is as impossible as being aware of the way I breathe all the time. I can make myself aware of the breathing process but cannot check on it throughout the day. However, as awareness of breathing (in the form of exercises) spills over into better breathing throughout the day, awareness of

what I really want in this checking game has a generally beneficial effect. I would now like to suggest to you that you play this game once, or preferably a few times, before you go on reading this. You may have more understanding for the game and its impact if you have experimented with it before I explain further.

Okay. You may have played this game and you may have experienced conflict between two or more choices and not have known how to resolve it. The suggestion is: Follow the rule, which is to check at every moment what you are doing and whether you are still doing what you want to do. You check and you see what you do is being aware of conflict (for instance, whether to empty an ashtray or read a newspaper). Your experience is "I am in conflict!" So the question is, "Do I want to be in conflict?" The answer may be "Yes, I want to be in this conflict," and you may remain there for awhile, not wanting to know which of the two activities to do. In all likelihood, you won't stay there too long. You will want to do either one of them, or perhaps a third thing that you had not previously thought of. Or, you may decide you hate to be in conflict and you hate this and don't want to continue this way, with the similar result of choosing one, or the other, or a third activity. And then, you check again.

People report very different experiences. Frequently, there is a great sense of relief resulting in a lovely feeling of serenity and being at one with self and the world. Some people experience anxiety and panic that usually disappear within a few sessions of playing the game. To them, the permission to do "what I want to" and not "what I should do" appears to hold an awesome threat.

I am now still sitting at the pond, playing another game related to the one I asked you to join. My game right now is to tell you, the reader, about this self-therapy game the way I want to and the way I think you may most easily follow my writing. As you see, this is only a "relative" of the game, not identical, because the goal is different and, therefore, there are different rules. The rule of this

style is: I must say what I want to say in a way that includes the spirit of the game as well as my fantasy of you, a reader.

There was a distraction now in my talking to you - the sun on my head. I put my kerchief on. Rule: "Disturbances take precedence." I want to be as comfortable as I can. Then, I want to go on thinking of you and me. I want to rest now and I believe that after that I will want to continue writing about the game. I have learned something from the game which, as a teacher, I already knew on other levels; I have learned to take any distraction or disturbance seriously, as a reality to be affirmed and dealt with, rather than as something to deny or hate. If I give disturbances to the goal their due, they fall into place. (This appears to be true for any creative or even routine endeavour.)

I have rested on a plank on the pond. I wanted to let my mind float like the plank on the water and I did. Some associations of this rest period come back now as distractions to my desire to write: cooking pots with vertical sides or sides leaning towards the centre must be more practical (in heat distribution) than those where the sides lean outward. I want to plan for more quiet weekends like this one with good friends in their country homes rather than spending weekends in hotels or at home in the city. This environment is what I like now - quietude and beauty in people and nature. I accepted the distractions and something more closely related came into my mind:

The words "My time and I are one" came back to me. They stem from a poem I wrote and did not understand fully when I wrote it - five years ago. Now, since I have played and understood the game, I know what they mean. "My time and I are one" . . . my time . . . the game time . . . at first, and then, on a less structures but spiritual level, "My time and I are choices in living are based more and more on awareness that my time belongs to me - me in awareness of whatever frame of reality I am in - with specific people in specific situations, in specific functions, within a

society in specific moments in history." But within this framework, all choices are mine - often with much freedom, often with relatively little leeway, mostly a mixture of self-selected and other-directed possibilities. Most of us don't realise how much more freedom of choice we do have than we are aware of at any given moment.

I have, with increasing frequency, played this game for about two years and have suggested it to more and more people. A number of my patients have experienced accelerated progress in their treatment that they attribute to something indefinable about the game. Some of my friends and I - who are not in therapy at this time - have felt a greater sense of freedom and productivity when we play the game more often. But for a long time I did feel frustrated that I had no rationale for something that has worked so well.

Recently, some ideas about why it works well have occurred to me. I want to share some of my hypotheses with you.

I guess we all experience often the feeling that what we must do seems to be the opposite of what we want to do. This means that the Should tells me what I think or feel I must do. The Should and the Want, then, are opponents. In the game, the Should loses the power of opposition to the Want because I may not do what I don't want to do: The Should in the game always says what I want to (by rule!).

This paradox resembles the therapeutic fact that obsolete defences most likely are resolved when the therapist accepts the patient's right to be anxious and resistive rather than when he tries to beak through his defensiveness. The therapist joins the patient's antiquated defences that are often (sometimes explicit, more often implicit) "shoulds" working as blocks against lively "wants." (This is what we call, in therapeutic lingo, "joining the resistance.")

Going along with the resistance works therapeutically on many levels:

In physiotherapy, one of the basic principles is to encourage the patient with a rigid limb to go along with the tension of the rigidity (stiffen the arm even more, and then relax it). Or, the physiotherapist, recognising the patient's frozen motion, can make the patient more comfortable through physical support of the frozen part, and either actively or passively can help the body unfreeze and release more realistic movement.

In psychotherapy, going along with the resistance means to support the patient's frozen emotions (detachment, superstitions, hostility, transference, etc.) - the person's right to be unhappy, unproductive, or asocial. With the therapist's support for his illness, the patient can afford to unfreeze his attitudes and let go because the therapist has helped him to establish faith in his - whatever - existence. Once the frozen emotionality has begun to thaw, the direction of all living is toward life (which includes change, growth, and sociability).

In the game, going along with the resistance implies joining my "should" with my "want." Examples: "I should work, but I don't want to; I should be friendly, but I feel angry; I should not eat so much, but I want to." The game says I must do what I want to do. This means that the power of the "should" is put into the service of the "want." My want is now a should. I can't say, for example, "I should not eat, but I do." I must decide which of the two I want more at this moment - to eat or not to eat. This decision includes my physical desires and my knowledge of the consequences of eating. (In playing the game, several obese friends and patients of mine have been surprised to find themselves in front of the refrigerator thinking that they wanted to eat but discovering with amazement, that there was no feeling whatsoever of desire for food.)

The power of the "should" previously may have rendered us apathetic or impotent because we experienced it as if we were children with the feeling of rebellion or submissiveness. The super-ego or the "top dog" has told us what to do and has made us

rebel against "it" or "him" respectively - even if what we experience as a "should" is actually what we "want." A habitually disorderly friend of mine found herself cleaning up her house whenever she played the game. Her disorder was the response to her mother's "should" which, for her, as an adult, was really a "want" suppressed by the antiquated rebellion against this "should." In the game, the should has joined the want. We have, for the ten minutes of the game, fused the power of the should with the power of the want. (Such want is experienced as an amalgamation of impulses and considerations guided by a sense of reality, and personal goal-directedness; it is a situation in which ego-integration becomes transparent as under an "experiential microscope.")

This, right now, is what I want to tell you about the game. I would also like you to know that I would appreciate any response you might want to give me, if and when you have played the game.

"The Here and Now point of intersection between past and future is the only moment in life in which I can act. We need considerable concentration and practice to take off our conventional anti-perception glasses. The apparently simple questions: "What are you feeling now?" and "What do you see at the moment?" demand a concentration of our senses, which we had learned to screen out." *(Dr. Ruth C. Cohn)*

Chapter 18

IN CONSULTATION WITH DR.RUTH C. COHN

Irene Klein

TCI IN LARGER GROUPS: CONSIDERING BASIC WORKING METHODS

This chapter of a book in which three-day workshops within large congresses are presented, analyses how the concepts and applications of TCI can facilitate the organisation and process of such large group events. The workshop themes were: "Ways out of the Arms Race" at the University of Hamburg (1986), "From Being Threatened to Acting," held by the International Association of Physicians Against Nuclear War in Essen (1987), and "Surviving in a Threatened World," organised by the Catholic Academy of the Archdiocese of Freiburg (1988). Ruth C. Cohn and a team of co-leaders, including Irene Klein led all three workshops. The following text provides basic information for working with larger groups; Most of the concepts are applicable for any groups larger than ca. 40 participants.

I. What is a large group?

The obvious answer to this question would be a figure deter-

mining how many participants make a group a large group. In the three examples in this book, the groups are made up of 200-400 participants. However, neither this figure nor any other individual figure can be the sole criteria for a definition/description. The question may be approached under two aspects: a subjective, personal and emotional one or a more intersubjective, thematically oriented one. Naturally both these aspects will overlap.

I will begin with the subjective aspect, which does not allow any figures to be quoted. The different ways in which individuals perceive and have experienced things determine whether or not someone thinks of a group as a "large group." Factors which have an influence on this include practice, subjective state of mind, anticipation of successful or unsuccessful interaction, of pleasant or difficult situations or participants, of a specific global situation, the state of one's own self-esteem as well as goals and themes and the amount of time allotted. Thus, some people would experience and refer to a specific group defined by objectively identical criteria (number of participants, goals, time...) and having, for example, 20 participants as a large group, while others would think of it as a "normal group."

This assessment is also connected to the anticipated and real perception of individual group members and/or the group as a whole, as well as to the personal interpretation of certain situations. If for example we are unfamiliar with persons or themes and afraid of our own judgement or that of the participants, then we will feel that our security is being jeopardised and even small groups will feel large, while larger groups will seem smaller in the course of time and with increasing trust. Therefore, it is easy to understand why in the course of a group's development process there may be changes as to whether it is perceived as a larger or smaller group. At the beginning of a group process, a group often seems too large to fathom ("I could never speak in a group this large") – while later on participants often say, "the group has become much smaller." The reason for the change in perception is the feeling of

security achieved by familiarity and the feeling of belonging which has been created by interaction experienced in practice.

The concept of "large groups" can also, Independent of subjective experience, be described with a few objective criteria. We can use the description of a "normally large group" as a point of reference for these criteria. Ideally, an interactional group - according to TCI - is one in which all individuals (I's), all other group members and the theme are basically related to one another; that all participants can be included in one or a few working units, either listening or speaking and definitely related to each other; that interaction in the plenary during the group process is always possible, but not obligatory; that it is possible for each participant to perceive and internally register every other; that relations between all individual members are at least possible. The implication for the group leader is that we are dealing with a "normally large group" as long as all members, at more or less the same time, can perceive and observe and make fairly good judgements concerning the I – WE – IT (theme/purpose). This can almost never be achieved completely, but with a restricted number of participants it is often possible to come very close to doing so.

If the number of participants is 15 – 25 -depending on goals and time allotted - all of this is still possible, if you disregard the subjective perceptual factors we have just discussed. In larger groups the circumstances described can hardly be achieved for the whole group, and if they are, then only thanks to the benefit of extra time and giving the participants a chance to get to know each other better in smaller sub- groups. But since experiencing interaction and relations is important for "living learning," corresponding structures need to be conceived and created in large groups.

In summary:

Factors for the definition of a large group are:

-Relatively few opportunities to interact in the group as a whole

(even if individual members would like to).

-Participants will not be able to establish contact with all other fellow participants.

-Not everyone will be able to speak in the plenary – even if they would like to.

-Primarily, relationships develop between individual participants or within the sub-groups. Relationships in the full group are either loose or weak, if the group is not as yet fully integrated. This can be promoted through close relations within the smaller groups or due to other special measures.

-It is often difficult to determine or recognise whether and in what way the individual "I's" are connected to the theme.

Despite these efforts to find a definition, which by nature can only be approximate, we still do not have a standard definition of what a "large group" is in a real situation and which type of structural framework can help create a favourable atmosphere in an individual group.

Even if all large groups tend to be quite different, let us remember that substantial "basic methodical ideas" which we are describing are based on practical experience and are applicable to all large groups and/or can be modified for any type of work with large groups.

At the same time it is important to always keep in mind that any type of work in and with a group must be subject to a thought and planning process which is new, individual and geared to each specific situation.

This is the reasoning as to why this chapter has been divided into two parts:

- First of all, under the heading "preparation" you will find a set of questions which are designed to assist you in pinpointing what is special about the situation and workshop you are dealing with, so

that good and well-founded decisions can be taken concerning themes, structures, etc.

- In the next part, individual methodical aspects that transpired during the description of the workshops are discussed in greater depth, these aspects being applicable to the planning of any large group.

II. Preparation of Workshops:

What sort of questions can group leaders ask themselves?

What do they need to know about themselves, others and the prevailing circumstances?

In the following the reader will be presented with numerous questions. Why is it a good idea to ask oneself questions like this when preparing and/or even before accepting an assignment in group leading?

All questions have the purpose of clarifying or throwing light on the overall situation – from a personal as well as a thematic point of view. They seek to point out "conditions" which may have an influence on the workshop, group leaders and the expected participants (I – WE – IT – GLOBE); they are also meant to heighten awareness about things which are not obvious at first sight but can contribute to determining the course of a workshop. The more aware group leaders are of these conditions, the easier it is for them to take a clear decision as to what they do why, how and when; the better they can prepare themselves for deviations from their expectations or the conditions, since deviations can only be perceived when we are aware of what is being expected. In other words, speaking with the axioms of Theme-Centered Interaction, the issue here is developing an awareness of interdependence in order to be able to make decisions and work autonomously.

1. Organisers and Assignments, Framework/Conditions

Large group events are often carried out on behalf of or within

the framework of an institution or organisation and are therefore situated in a very specific context, which in turn influences the event. This is why one should recognise and be aware of this context.

-Which are the specific globe-factors of the organisation or institution? (E.g., its field of activity or commitment, its ethics, goals or interests, "products", sponsors, prestige...) Why did the organisation ask me?

-Which are the interests defined by the organisers and the possible hidden interests I suspect are behind these? Which are the official goals and which are "unofficial" or hidden ones that I suspect? Who is the target group?

-What motivates the institution to make me this offer with this theme at this time (what has been said explicitly, what do I surmise)? Why is it me they want? What do I believe and what are my doubts?

-How do the institution's ethics "fit in" with my own ethical principles? If they do not: what reasons do I nevertheless have in wanting to take the offer based on my own ethics?

-How much confidence do I have in this institution? What does an offer from precisely this organiser mean to me? What does this task mean to me?

-How do the job and the organiser fit into my network of interests – ideally or materially ?

-How much/what is predetermined by the organiser, how free am I to choose themes, working methods, assistants and timetables?

-Do the organisers envisage publications? Are they to be an integral part of the event? Which interests does this serve? What do I want?

-What means/funds are being made available: rooms, materials, subsistence allowances, accommodation, fees...?

-Which rooms are available; what does this mean for the number of participants? Can the rooms be adapted to meet various needs (e.g., movable tables and chairs, space for wall posters, sufficient room for small groups in the main room and/or adjacent rooms)?

-What must I clarify and do if "my" workshop is part of a larger conference, on which I have no or only a restricted amount of influence? What type of rooms do I need and what for; how large or small should they be ideally? How can I creatively use rooms that are too large or too small - or find more appropriate ones?

-Which persons might come; how can I acquire knowledge about them? What will the time and distance ratio look like? What is the workshop's overall context, and how will other presentations fit in with mine? What is on the agenda beforehand, at the same time and afterwards? How do the other speakers work? Which opportunities for coordination and agreements are important to me, and can I make them happen?

-What could happen that is unforeseen?

2. The Assignment/Task and Myself

-Why do I wish to take this job; which hopes, goals, wishes and concerns do I link it to("on the surface"/direct versus more "underneath"/indirect concerns)? Am I more attracted to the theme or to the expected target group, for example? Or to the opportunity to pass on or convey something? Or do I mostly want to do something together with certain people? Do I wish to reconcile a grudge; resolve a personal low mood; honour; money...?

-How self-confident do I feel about taking the job, with regard to thematic demands, my personal schedule, methodical demands, my personal wellbeing?

-If I have been assigned staff to be working with me: what do I know about them? Do I want to work with them (what do I and don't I want to do)? Do they wish to work with me or have they

been ordered to do so? How much independence/freedom do I need and do they need, and how do I intend to achieve this? Which role has each individual been allotted; do I agree with this or do I wish to make changes?

-Do I have plans/an interest in publications or does anybody else? How can I look out for my interests here, who could help me and how?

-How familiar/how distant is the target group from my point of view? Am I enthusiastic about it, or afraid? What can I do to make myself feel as safe and comfortable as possible?

-Can I afford to have stage fright and how much of a perfectionist am I?

Most of these questions apply to a situation in which I am my own employer as well as to one in which somebody else hires me.

3. Group Leading Alone – Group Leading With Others

-Why do I have to or want to work on my own?

What would co-leaders or assistants contribute?

-What do I expect of co-leaders or assistants? Would I like to have or do I need colleagues to help me as a leader or complement my own skills? Do I want or am I obliged to include beginners? Do I want to reach a methodical agreement with persons not familiar with TCI and which conditions do I wish to set out and accept?

-Do I need specialists to represent special aspects?

-How much time do we need to plan and agree on the various aspects of our cooperation? Distances, means of transport (times) necessary to bring us together. Who must be familiar with the TCI-method and/or who uses other methods and "fits in" with my leadership style?

-What do we need to do in order to get to know each other and become conversant with the project? How familiar does every

one need to be with the concept in order to be able to live up to his/her task?

-How much time do we need for interim assessment and what does this mean for the planning process (personal energy, money, time devoted)?

-Is there experience from prior meetings of the cooperation partners which should be kept in mind and/or discussed beforehand (difficulties, conflicts, particular strengths, rivalries...)

4. Expected Participants

-Has the workshop been announced quite publicly (e.g. in the press), or rather has it been advertised in an institution's program or as a specialised course? Who is likely to come (probably persons who would also go to other events organised by this institution), and which pattern do these usually follow? Or rather persons interested above all in the theme or certain individuals?)?

-How many participants are expected? What does this mean for me as far as the space I must provide/request is concerned and which methodical demands will be necessary if "living learning" is to be made possible?

-Are the participants coming of their own free will and because they are personally interested or is the event part of an employment relationship? Which parts of the organisation are represented by the participants; what relations of hierarchy are there? Which open or hidden conflicts can I anticipate? Can I influence who participates? Are some participants not independent in that their performance might be judged or have financial consequences for them?

-Who is issuing invitations and what does this imply for the participants? What is their (probable) relation to the inviting party? What do those invited anticipate or know about the organiser or other participants?

-Who is funding the meeting and what influence can this have

on participants and the work to be accomplished?

-What kind of an age structure does the group have? How many men and how many women? What does this imply for our work on the theme within the group?

-What can I assume the level of knowledge and maturity of the participants to be? What prejudices may they have? What is my opinion of this group of people? What experience do I have with them? What do my assumptions imply for the preparation of the theme, the structure and the environment, as well as for my own personal preparation?

-How much prior experience do I know/suspect the expected group of participants will have concerning the theme, working structures, learning; which interests and goals may they have for the seminar and what does this mean for me? Should I mention/consider this in a letter circulated prior to the workshop?

5. Preparing the Workshop

-Which goals/concerns do I/do we have – based on my/our fundamental ethical beliefs/the ethics of TCI? How do they agree/clash with those of the organiser? How do I/do we justify this ethical priority when dealing with the organiser? (According to the TCI axioms, an offer cannot be accepted if it disregards human dignity.)

-Thematic preparation: What sort of content do I wish to convey and how does this fit in with the expectations of the organiser?

The context of the organiser's globe. Using one's own materials and texts related to the theme.

-Which methodical structures are appropriate to motivate participants to not just passively absorb/consume material, but rather think for themselves, process and integrate new knowledge, relate to others and deal with others? How can we ensure that participants can have their concerns addressed in the most satisfactory

way possible, to the extent that they have to do with the theme/the task and exchange with other participants? Discussions of what will be necessary with co-leaders and/or assistants.

-Distribution and/or delegation of the various tasks according to the needs of the theme, of myself as the group leader, the co-leaders/assistants and the external circumstances. This includes monitoring the premises, going through the program and developing alternatives which can be used depending on what kind of a situation one is presented with or what kind develops. (Functions such as doorman, usher, poster carrier, etc.)

-Which tasks must be carried out in preparation of and for the staging of the event, and who is to take care of them? (E.g. technical equipment, preparing the room, preparing posters, minutes, interpreters,...) Which tasks/learning opportunities are offered to students (here: of TCI) or can be created for them, such as for example observing interventions, keeping an eye on processes, observing the balance of I, We, It, recognising globe conditions, etc.

-Who takes care of work in connection with the publication plans of the organisation itself or of one's own?

-Possibly preparation of flyers, posters, etc.

-Preparing/ensuring the necessary media, equipment (when planning to tape proceedings do not forget to check with the organisers and possibly also with the participants).

-Preparation of welcome, an overview of the workshop (transparency) and introduction to the theme.

-Globe preparation also includes: In which context/at which time is the event taking place, and how will this have an effect on the theme or the participants; how can this be covered in the introduction? (E.g. political landscape, topical events, occasion and background due to which the workshop is taking place at this precise point in time...)

III. Presentation of and Reflections on Some Individual Methodical Elements

In the following, methodical elements used in working with large groups will be discussed. All statements are based on personal experience and practice (Ruth C. Cohn and Irene Klein) and are the result of mutual discussions. The methodical ideas are based on the TCI value system. They are applications of its fundamental concerns and its basic working assumptions. In order to facilitate understanding of the methodical elements to be described in the following, the author has chosen to first quote an excerpt of a description of the model of Theme-Centered Interaction.

1. The Model of Theme-Centered Interaction

Concerns of TCI

The fact that we are alive makes us important – me, you, us. The more we understand our human and material dependency on each other, our interdependence, and at the same time are affirmative about our independent possibilities and our responsibilities in living together, the more realistic and satisfying our personal and joint lives will be. This even holds true for small groups such as families, communes, groups of friends and teams. It also applies to peoples, cultures, social classes, races and our global community. The more useful/purposeful the tasks we chose for ourselves are, i.e., the more they are geared to personal as well as objective, common needs, the more hope and joy will we have in life.

TCI arose from the awareness that it is necessary to value individuality and community equally, in other words, that "individual" and "collective" cannot be opposites, because personalities and communities are inextricably linked. We must overcome the dictates of dictatorships that impose enemy images and atrocities. These dictatorships include government, economic and cultural powers, as well as our own "indifference," since they do not make a difference between what does and does not hold true in life.

Methodical Aspects

The principle of dynamic balance

Every group is determined by four factors:

1. the individual (I),
2. group interaction (We),
3. the theme or task (It),
4. the environment in the strictest and in the widest sense (Globe).

TCI is based on the working assumption that every individual (I), the group's interaction (We) and the completion of a task (It) are to be seen as equally important and that the mutual influences of the group and the environment must be considered. Symbolically, this configuration can be represented by an equilateral triangle in a multi-facetted, transparent sphere: I, We and It are equally important, the same as our near and distant environment, the "Globe".

The recognition and enhancement of the balance between I-We-It factors in the Globe is the basis of TCI group work and leadership.

What this is about is striking a dynamic balance between the significance of each individual person, the significance of interaction, the significance of the theme (with reference to the task) and the significance of the effective relations with and within the environment. Awareness of this working premise is enhanced in all group members; it is the duty of the TCI-group leader to contribute to its practical implementation.

During the process of group work, the emphasis put on individual factors will rise and fall; but dynamic balance as a principle and a compromise is consistent and is always restored as quickly as possible. This means: one needs to recognise, for example,

whether hurt feelings or tensing bodies, a stuffy room or irritating noise is disturbing individuals or interaction and whether this situation can be remedied; usually this is possible, provided such recognition is permitted! Or, the prevailing theme can be lost due to a top-heavy sub-theme, or vice versa; in this case, the balance with It has to be restored. Or discussions of external events may take priority for too long, thereby hiding an interactional We-problem or the work to be accomplished itself, etc.

Dynamic balance as a concept goes beyond the triangle in the sphere. Disruptions of balance can be caused in any individual by neglecting to maintain an equilibrium between work and rest, giving and taking, spending too much time with children and too little with adults, or the reverse, too much training and too little practice, etc.

Dynamic balance is a general concept for living, the necessity to include counterpoints in life, according to the Chinese yin-yang philosophy. Life is characterised by flowing realignments, not by static elements. The concept of dynamic balance helps us recognise how we can favour living learning and teaching - and living life.

2. Welcome and Introduction

Before we draw up a welcome or introduction for a large group event, it is best to remember who may be attending. The welcome and introduction should relate to the participants' situation and use it as a specific point of departure, thereby making a first connection between participants and the group leader.

Our experience with large groups has quite a bit in common:

-A comparable group size – since there is hardly any difference between 200 and 400 people as to how they experience and are confronted with structures. As soon as a group has approximately 50 members, very similar criteria apply.

-Every one was attending voluntarily, owing to interest in a theme and/or because of a commitment or even because they belonged to a group dedicated to specific concerns.

-In Hamburg and Essen most participants had academic degrees and political interests; in Freiburg, too, mostly groups of individuals with similar education and interests were to be expected.

-In all three workshops, there was no reason to assume there would be any substantial hierarchical relations between participants who would probably have a significant influence on the work to be accomplished and/or would have to be/could be dealt with.

These or similar points dealing with preconceptions or prior knowledge can be addressed in a welcome. In this case, for example, it was the background of a similar commitment and the wish to meet kindred spirits. The knowledge of a here-and-now situation can also be incorporated in a greeting; sometimes external events can be so overriding or even visible in the room itself that it is safe to assume that they will be foremost in participants' minds, e.g. a political or ecological happening, a particular type of weather, a room designed or decorated in a particular fashion, in short, things which have already happened and can no longer be changed. This is not only significant when discussing a "thematic field" related to the event, but also in general – since if one fails to deal with it, participants' attention will be elsewhere. A successful identification of participants' inner concerns and obligations leads to initial encounters and a feeling of "truly being addressed", being important, understood.

Principle: Starting out in a way which does justice to theme and situation.

Encounters can also be the result of the group leader telling participants something about him/herself and his/her motivation, as well as about his/her background with the theme and his/her emotional situation right now at the beginning.

This makes it possible to experience him/her as a person, and at the same time it is a request and permission for every one else present to be there as his/her own/other person. This in turn is a

challenge to the I to connect to the other different I's and the theme, on a very personal level and not just an objective or abstract one. It is a an encouragement to regard oneself as important; this makes people more willing to regard others as important as well, and not anxiously and defensively withdraw from them. (Nevertheless, there are always situations and groups for which this initial thematic and/ or personal information from group leaders is not a good idea or should be envisaged only to a very limited extent, if at all, since participants might be quick to interpret it as insecurity, or it could lead to a premature restriction of participants' creative ideas to designated examples.)

The introduction is meant to create interactional contact and contact to the theme. This shows us once again why it is so important to prepare for each specific group of participants: it is important to adjust one's language to them, to relate the manner of introduction to them, to be more objective/professional or more personal in addressing them - according to what the situation calls for, etc. It is also important to be aware of whether the leader is familiar or not with the participants' field/profession – and what sort of emotions this will set off – whether he/she is dealing with committed members of an institution or movement or whether these are people who have spontaneously accepted a one-time invitation.

Another important thing is to realise that defining the atmosphere of a workshop begins long *before* the welcome and introduction. This includes arranging the room, lighting, having people approach and welcome arriving participants...etc. The purpose is to create an inviting atmosphere without too much disruption – and this requires individual thinking for different types of groups. This includes leaders' awareness of the present situation, among other things whether the beginning should take place precisely according to schedule or whether it is possible to delay it a little because – for a recognisable reason - too many participants are still only just arriving...

3. Presenting the Structure of the Program

Presenting the structure of the program is a separate part of the introduction. After the welcome and the introduction to the theme, the structure of the workshop can be presented, so that the participants know and can adjust to the fact that – for example - they will first be listening or watching in the plenary for a while, but will have time for an exchange in smaller groups later. This is also the time – depending on participants' prior experience - for an inviting and explanatory statement on why working in small groups is important: because one can usually approach a theme more intensely by talking about it oneself, and because exchanges in a small group allow us to learn more about the way others think and feel than simply listening to lectures.

An "inviting and explanatory statement" might include a request to give the structure the benefit of the doubt and experiment with it.

The following are to become transparent: the program, the purpose of the program, the purpose of the time schedule for the plenary and small groups, as well as which technical and organisational circumstances are necessary for successful deliberations. Apart from a good introduction, all this contributes decisively to having participants accept the situation. They are to feel that they are being taken seriously as partners. They are not a "pawn" in a process which others have prepared and planned for them. Transparency and a grasp/an overview of what is going to happen make the participants insiders who have a share in decision-making and a right to explanations and illumination of the reasons behind structural decisions. They may have come here initially because of the theme or other factors which attracted them – now it is necessary to consent to or at least comply with the structural framework set out by the leader. Experience has shown that the willingness to go along with this grows if participants are not subjected to having one step after the other thrown at them, but rather have an opportunity to recognise the connection between steps. Knowing what

to expect meets our need for security. And this becomes more significant the more unfamiliar participants are with each other, the leader, the venue and naturally the theme. When we know what to expect we can better relate to the task to be accomplished and be calm inside and out.

4. Presentations, Lectures and Variations

Objective Impulses in Balance with I and WE

The issue of whether a presentation/lecture – and if so of what length – allows for living and participatory learning at all is a matter of disagreement among "TCI-practitioners." Various target groups may also react quite differently. There are people who cannot stand presentations, who become restless after a mere five minutes and would rather have a discussion, since "the lecturer cannot relate to my world". And then there are others, such as academics, managers and politicians, who are accustomed to listening to lectures only and who are quick to dismiss speaking about the content of a presentation oneself as "incompetent, empty nonsense".

In larger TCI-groups, lectures and/or presentations similar to lectures (e.g. dialogues) are almost always important – always, however, taking into account the individual persons, the relations to be developed among them and the situational context.

Agreeing to listen to a lecture (dialogue...) gives us the opportunity to partake in what a person thinks and seeks to discover, to hear about his experience, to be taken along into the world of another and compare it to our own, to go along with this or introduce limits, to identify with the lecturer or feel our individuality more strongly because he is different. We can experience "new" things and understand what others have thought before us.

The purpose of a presentation is teaching and learning in the sense of expanding our horizons of thought, knowledge and behaviour.

Learning research has discovered, however, that people chiefly absorb only material that touches their own interests, rings a bell, is not too unfamiliar and therefore does not generate anxiety and defensiveness, material which connects to their own experience, i.e., links up to what is already there.

These findings have also shown that listening alone does not involve or concern people as much as when they have an opportunity for personal contemplation and tentative thought. This can be accomplished in silent intervals as well as in interaction with others who can throw light on the theme from various points of view.

The techniques of silent intervals, opportunities to write and interact should be taken into account in lecture didactics in order to enhance a living learning process.

Thus the basic issue is: How can a subject be presented and dealt with in a lecture in a way which attracts and holds participants' attention? Inner involvement and interactional confrontation should ensue, and personal experience in connection with the theme should be updated (I and WE-references).

Some fundamental and practical fragments of thought concerning this:

According to TCI-aspects it is important to achieve a dynamic (non-static) balance between the theme, the individual and the group. Thus I must keep my eye on the theme, but should also be thinking about the imaginary, possible situation of individuals, their relation to the theme, their situation arising from being present here, their relations amongst each other (i.e., what do I know specifically about this group, its development, its relations). What is also important is to consider the venue for the presentation as a whole, the environment, events prior to the lecture and possibly afterwards, etc.

Do not forget that participants will tend to be less prepared when approaching a theme than I myself will be as a lecturer. I

have prepared my thoughts at length in advance, have become accustomed to the theme, and am close to it. Usually participants will first have to be led in this direction. What can help us succeed in this is: making the theme transparent, sometimes (but not necessarily at the beginning of the presentation) stating a personal connection to the theme or even a personal mood, linking up to suspected connections the participants may have to the theme, to their knowledge, their experience. It can also help to state the background against which the theme has developed, or our relation to the organisers.

Another important thing is how the theme of the presentation is phrased. The "theme" is a concern put into words, and it will be most effective if it is along the lines of participants' concerns. If this is not the case, if the theme has been determined by an external decision for example, an apt phrasing of the theme can nevertheless attract the group's attention. The phrasing of the theme should assist each individual participant in finding his own way of approaching it, as well as help all participants come together in an encounter within the theme. Thus themes can sometimes have the power to bring people together and have them connect to each other. Without an implicit or explicit theme there can be no interactional group. A good theme implies an appeal: "be involved with me, think about me, how do you experience me, what are your thoughts about me, take an interest in how others deal with me".

A well-phrased theme is brief and clear, so that every one can remember it. Its language and demands are designed to fit the participants, exclude no one and hurt no one. It is not so restricted that it does not allow for spontaneous ideas, thoughts and images *and* is not so sweeping that it allows for just anything to be included. It has an emotionally appealing nature, tends to be phrased positively and must still make way for other opinions. It calls for thoughts and ideas. It takes the group process into account, as

well as the dynamic balance between objective concerns, persons, their interaction and the globe.

How participants are introduced to the theme is also of great importance. At first, some participants may need time to approach a theme. If a lecturer begins to elaborate on its content straight away, personal queries and thoughts hardly have a chance to develop. It may help to have a brief silent interval after the theme has been announced, thereby enhancing inner focus and thoughts. Everyone has a chance to recall personal experience concerning the theme. Silent intervals are a TCI method. A theme can also be introduced by a question, or by a text, an experience, a poem, an image, a meditation exercise, etc. There are many introductive techniques – according to the group's overall configuration and situation. In general, what is decisive is the theme's clarity and having flexible possibilities to open one's own doors and find a way in.

Equally important in connection with leading participants toward and including them in the theme is allowing for pauses and silent intervals, so that every one can collect their own thoughts or thrash out an idea. A presentation can be interrupted by several one to five minute breaks, by "humming" groups (two to four participants turn to each other in their seats and speak to each other briefly), thereby going into more depth on a specific issue or stating a personal experience concerning an issue, and naturally by working groups.

As a rule, a maximum of 15 to 20 minutes of continuous presentation should not be exceeded, after which an interaction phase is necessary, in order to achieve a personal and interactional developing of the theme, establish relations and hold listeners' attention.

When someone joins an existing group as a new lecturer, he/she can introduce him/herself by latching on to something that is already tangible for the group (e.g. posters in the room), establishing relations with the group by discussing past developments or asking where the group stands; by making a joint effort to estab-

lish a link to the theme based on steps taken up until now, or jointly defining the point in the overall learning process at which this theme or this presentation is being dealt with.

It is important for participants to be able to follow logical steps. This can be done by announcing or even visualising individual steps at the outset, possibly by presenting a brief summary after each section and giving a preview of the next section. It is also important to have visual contact to the participants in order to be aware of whether they are identifying and following. Signals from the group can be discussed, e.g. restlessness, exchanging of looks or smiles, private conversations which are often helpful when discussed openly.

Concerning linguistic style: Short sentences are better than long ones, complete sentences preferable to fragments. It is a good idea to adjust one's personal language to the group. It helps to speak freely/speak and think at the same time, not read things out; when you are called upon to put ideas into words while speaking, your speech automatically becomes slower and more understandable. Even if it feels safer to write down everything beforehand, it is still possible to think through what is being said once again while speaking, since this makes it much easier for participants to follow in their own thoughts. Speaking freely intensifies our contact to participants, and if a person does not have the courage to do so, he/she might consider simply admitting it. (Leaders who openly admit to weaknesses often relieve every one concerned of a burden and thereby simplify group interaction. Naturally - as with all statements - this is not a rule!)

Further possibilities to establish the I-WE relation are: referring to examples from participants' every day life, pointing to missing references, requesting that participants set up their own link to an idea which has been presented, referring to the reality of divergent thinking among participants "permissively", in order to generate interest in it, and most important of all: showing oneself as a per-

son and being present rather than hiding behind the theme.

Thus, a presentation calls not only for thematic but also for methodical preparation, with a view to how those concerned feel and what they understand, as well as interactional concerns.

And despite all essential preparation, it is important for the lecturer to remain open for specific situations that may arise, be willing to do without prepared material on the spur of the moment and make new decisions.

In summary, the questions that should be clarified before taking decisions on the methods for shaping a presentation are:

Who belongs to and how large is the target group, what are they used to; what is expected, what is the framework/the environment in which the presentation/the dialogue ...will be taking place, what type of room is being provided; what do I think I can achieve as a lecturer in the light of these conditions and factors, how well can I speak or lecture freely, what type of a disposition do I have; will I be assisted by others with whom I could develop the theme together in the form of a dialogue; what has happened earlier and what will follow (is the mood more meditative or is there a great potential for action in the room) etc.?

A presentation or an introduction to a thematic complex can be staged as a dialogue. This is feasible if for example two lecturers from different scientific fields or walks of life are present, or if a preparation group was involved in the event and cooperation is possible between an individual and the lecturer. In a dialogue, thoughts and experience from different areas of life come together. Therefore, a dialogue encourages participants to actively participate. Personal experience is touched upon and recalled and participants have more opportunities to identify with the proceedings. Divergent opinions from different areas complement or stand out against each other and encourage people to voice their own opinion and challenge things themselves. Dialogue is a

form of communication, and the more congenial (at once compassionate and objective) the conversation is, the more willingness there will be later to make subsequent small groups a success - because dialogue serves as a model for successful communication. This type of introductory dialogue can also be carried out with one or more of the participants, which can rouse quite a bit of interest. In this case, the leader must be confident enough to stay on track.

When a presentation is connected to a teaching concern it can also – for a "smallish large group" – be linked to a teaching discussion. This can still be successful even with 100-150 participants – but here again things depend on the group and the inclinations and the abilities of the leader. A teaching discussion means that at certain points participants are requested to join in, verbalise a question, name an experience. Usually – but not always – the group leader will designate when it is a good time to do so. He/she must be very aware of what seems important for this situation, for its goals and thematic subject matter. There is always the danger of sliding into endless discussions and losing sight of the purpose as planned. Thus teaching discussions as a form of presentation require a great deal of thematic and communicative competence. Ongoing conversations must be interrupted time and again, firmly but nevertheless graciously, in order to continue working on the theme. The group leader must keep several things in mind: the goal and thematic content, him/herself, the individual participants, interaction and time. Often quick decisions are required as to what will take priority right now. A balance must be struck between two dangers: the discussion becoming too narrowly restricted, and thus sterile, or too expansive and thus ineffective.

5. Interacting in Sub-Groups

Interacting in a smaller group (as one of the sub-groups of a larger group or plenum) serves several purposes: exchanging and sharing of individual feelings, thoughts and experiences; accenting the importance

of the individual person; facilitating interaction in its complexity; interrupting the concentration and dependence on the leader(s); and liberating the proficiencies of the individual participant.

The quality of communication in the sub-group will be promoted through clear structuring and a good introduction. For many, the directive to be actively involved in discussion may seem unusual. This may cause uncertainty. Even those experienced in group work require the necessary support provided through structuring. If a cooperative behaviour in discussion is unfamiliar or unknown to the participants or seldom practised, then guidance and suggestions are all the more necessary. The so-called "helping rules", Ruth Cohn's advice for behaviour in the group, provide important support - for instance, "Try to express yourself as clearly as possible and to listen as carefully as possible," "No one will be compelled to speak, but everyone should have the opportunity to do so," and "Avoid monopolising - try to take everyone seriously." These rules are derived from the postulate, "Be your own chairperson - be aware of yourself and of others." What matters in the small group is developing awareness for one's self and for the others - as dynamic and independently thinking and feeling persons in the process of working on the general theme. Each person has the chance to concentrate on those aspects that are or have become important to him or her. "What I say should be authentic and sincere, but I do not have to say everything I am thinking" (selective authenticity). Listening carefully and wanting to understand is more important than expressing opinions about what the others are saying. The issue here is neither conformity nor determining who is right - rather it is that of raising our consciousness about what and how those involved in the group discussion are thinking and feeling. No one should be coerced and no one should let themselves be coerced.

Of course, it is not possible to describe this process in detail, since this depends on the particular group of participants and their

understanding of what is possible and necessary in the situation.

How can the participants be divided up into sub-groups?

There are many possibilities to form these groups, according to the size of the larger group, the theme, and the situation of the participants:

- Using numbers. For instance, if 6 subgroups are to be formed in a group of 36 participants, the participants count up to 6 in the circle or other seating arrangements. All number 1's are one group, all 2's another, and so on.

- Forming the group with neighbours, i.e. those sitting nearby. Sometimes additional criteria can be used, for instance, "Choose those you have had little contact with" or "Strive for a balance of men and women."

- Choosing among several given sub-themes with a limit on the size of the sub-group. Being able to choose among several themes is often good, because differing interests can thereby be better respected. (Of course, in some situations it is preferable for all sub-groups to be working on the same theme.) It might be useful to have two or three blank cards ready for the formulation of additional themes, since it is impossible for the group leader or team to be provide all relevant themes. Thereby no one has to feel neglected in the case that none of the sub-themes appeal to him or her.

Being able to visualise the theme is very important; acoustic and optical signals complement one another and provide a more advantageous basis for decisions.

We have found it extremely important to emphasise that the way in which a suggestion is made has a great influence upon the mood of the group and the behaviour of the participants. Beyond a doubt, the leaders' own behaviour has an influence on the quality of the interaction in the group. Whether I am dictatorial or chaotic or permissive or trusting or caring or depreciating, this will be sensed by the participants and affects them - they will become

uncomfortable or trusting or assured of their worth, aware of their own competence or merely of their own insignificance. Frank feedback among participants and leader(s) can be very helpful in learning about the effect of what is being said and asserted.

In giving directions for breaking up into groups, the group leader has to walk the tightrope between being dictatorial/authoritarian and leaving everything to chance. It is important to clarify whether one's own functioning as leader is clear, authoritative and objective - based on experience and not on manipulation.

Hesitating and being cautious reinforces the inner hesitation and cautiousness of the participants. The confidence of the leader is matched at this point with the possible lack of confidence of many participants, because the task is an unaccustomed one and also strenuous. At this point the leader conveys the conviction that the directions are purposeful and that they will bring good results. That which is being suggested is *one* way to achieve this.

If the sub-groups are to be meeting in different rooms, it is necessary to stipulate clearly that no one is to leave the room until the sub-groups are complete - otherwise some participants might be left out.

The exact formulation of the task to be accomplished is also important, as well as clear instructions as to time. Specifications as to when the sub-groups are to end and the participants return to the plenum are necessary because smaller groups are reluctant to split up. "We will meet together again in . . . minutes, according to each person's watch, so that we can start the plenary session punctually." (Ruth C. Cohn: Announcing an exact time - for instance, 10:30, is an invitation to "warfare," and wrangling about what the exact time really is.)

A few moments of silence and reflection before breaking up into the smaller groups will give each person a chance to be in contact with his or her own feelings and thoughts. An appropriate short text, perhaps a poem, can be read aloud, followed by a

period of silence. A suggestion might be made to form the sub-groups as quietly as possible. Sub-groups generally should not consist of more than 5-6 persons. It doesn't matter how many are interested in a specific theme, since groups of more than 6 can break up again in smaller groups. Things run smoothly when accompanied with some humour and also explanations as to why silence or near-silence is important.

A very helpful way of closing the work in the sub-group is to write down what has been important, either each person individually or as a summary for the group. This has to be announced at the time the sub-groups are being formed. Putting these thoughts into writing helps to conclude the process in the sub-group by creating an intermediary phase before the renewed gathering together in plenum. The profusion of what has been said will be sorted through once again by the participants. Certain thoughts that are considered important will be settled on. This aids the individual in structuring the abundance of ideas and in retaining the more important ones. At the same time, this is a preparation for the discussion in the plenary session. The written results can be taken home as a memento or they can be collected to be a part of a printed documentation. In the latter case, it is helpful to collect the papers before the plenary session begins, since a paper in one's hand tempts the person to read what is written instead of speaking freely and listening to others. If there is a break between the work in the sub-group and in plenum, the papers could be perused by the group leader(s) and their assistants in order to prepare for the following discussion in the large group.

Where will the sub-groups meet? If the room is very large, it will be possible for several or all of the groups to work there simultaneously - indeed, providing that the noise level is not too high, thus hindering concentration, this can lead to a stimulating working environment. A collection of small islands is created. The animated discussions lend a spirit of togetherness among all par-

ticipants. If the room is large enough, it is not even disturbing if preparations for the subsequent plenary session are being made. If several rooms are available, using them for the sub-groups can be considered. It is important to emphasize that this kind of writing assignment is not the same as note taking or summarizing everything which has been discussed in the sub-group. The writing is done at the end of the session - as an exercise in selecting what was important to me (or to us).

Recommended time allotment for sub-groups: 40-60 minutes for sub-groups with 4-6 persons each, so that each person basically has at least 8 minutes "speaking time" and there is also time for a brief silence.

6. Reassembling in the Large Group (Plenum)

The reestablishment of the group as a whole is important so that the sub-groups relate to one another again and in order to insure interaction among all participants. The plenum offers the opportunity to state important experiences and to pose open questions to the group leaders as well as to other participants. Perspectives can be enlarged upon as the intimacy of the smaller group is guided back into the reality of the larger one. This can serve as a stimulation to seek and find solidarity for one's own concerns and opinions. The plenum at the end (or at the end of a phase) of a seminar, symposium or conference is actually the forum for "securing results" and for concluding the process as a whole (or a part of it).

What are appropriate structures for realising this?

Time Structuring

The time for the beginning of the plenum must already be announced clearly and explicitly before dividing into sub-groups. In addition, certain signals that indicate the beginning of the plenary session should be announced.

For example: a gong signal approximately 5-15 minutes before the ending of the sub-groups (depending of the time allotted as a

whole) can indicate that it is time for any assigned paper work to be done.

Two minutes before the end another reminder through a gong signal, perhaps underlined by the announcement per microphone, "...sub-groups never want to part, but I remind you..."

Structuring Within the Room

Since the structuring within the room promotes interaction, it has to be set up accordingly. In very large groups concentric circles or the horseshoe form, similar to an amphitheatre, have proven suitable. Almost everyone can see everyone else and the leader(s) has/have visual contact with almost everyone. A simple solution is to have participants in the inner circle sitting on mats or blankets on the floor. This is, however, not possible in all groups. Since doing so is unusual, it is advisable to explain the benefits while giving directions. In the second circle, participants can be seated on chairs. A third circle can be formed by participants sitting at tables. If none of this is possible - for organisational or even for emotional reasons - everyone can be encouraged to be creative in evolving a plan by which everyone can see and hear everyone else optimally.

The leader should assess in each situation whether a single circle of chairs (possible up to a maximum number of 30 persons) or concentric circles is preferable. Important factors in the decision are: conditions in the room itself, the quality of relationships in the group, visual and auditory resources among the group and the leaders, etc. Physical proximity enables everyone to see everyone else and to feel each person's personality and also supports the interaction. Large groups in small rooms generally are more productive than small groups in large rooms. A room that is too large can be partitioned so that participants do not feel lost in the plenum.

It pays off to seriously consider the issue of space and dividing up in groups in separate rooms already during the planning stage -

also to inspect the rooms before hand.

Differing Forms of Reassembling

Fishbowl and podium:

Several places are reserved within the most inner circle for individual participants from the various sub-groups, who will be interacting with each other - the choice can be spontaneous or prearranged. Usually this fishbowl should have a leader, even if he or she limits this function to only few impulses. A leader is a must if there are more than 6 participants. One or two of the places in the fishbowl remain empty, so that other persons from the outside circle(s) can join the discussion with specific contributions. These places become free again once the contribution has been made. Depending on the number of themes being handled, the fishbowl will last 15 to 30 minutes, after which the discussion will be opened to everyone in the plenum. One or two participants representing each sub-group in the inner circle is advantageous, but the total number should not exceed 8-10 persons.

Guidelines for what is to be said in the fishbowl emphasise that the task is not to deliver a report, but to tell something about what is important (or has become important) to the person speaking at the present moment or to tell which issues he or she is interested in pursuing now. This leads to a livelier interaction that develops the topic, whereas reports can be stilted and rarely lead to an increase in understanding or an expansion of the subject.

Should specific considerations as to space and/or the situation of the participants not be favourable in deciding for a fishbowl (with inner and outer circles and including the spontaneous decision on the part of those participating in speaking), it is possible to begin the plenum with a podium discussion with representatives from the different sub-groups. Participants for this can be selected beforehand or sometimes members of the preparation committee can assume this task.

Reassembling with no intermediary phase:

Sometimes, often because of lack of time, it is necessary to reassemble without an intermediary group (fishbowl or podium). In either case the leader will direct everyone's attention towards a sharing and expressions of commitment in the plenum with his or her introductory remarks and engaging comments - not to report, but to continue an elaboration on the theme. "Not everything, only a few things can be said in this large group, but everything which is important to single person is of interest. One's own thoughts, perceptions and views will be elaborated through those of the others."

Note: It is difficult if not impossible to conduct plenum sessions in a large room without a microphone.

Regardless of the form chosen for reassembling - fishbowl, podium, soliciting comments of individuals in the plenum as a whole - an introduction is necessary to make transparent what is happening or should be happening, as well as the significance of that.

For example, "Several participants from the different sub-groups are now sitting here in the middle. They are going to. . ." or

(When the leader animates the plenum as a whole with this or a similar request), "Who would like to share something or ask about something which has become important to him or her. . .?"

or,

"Those matters which have become important for someone here, can become significant for others. Sharing and expressing commitment can . . ."

or

"What would you be sorry about on your way home (or tomorrow), if you neglected to say it or to ask it now . . ."

Important: These suggestions should be stimulating. Group leaders who apply TCI principles must be guided by their own individual styles, manners of speaking and ways of thinking.

Back again to the structuring of time:

The time schedule, including how the entire allotted time is to be broken up and when the seminar/workshop will be ending, should be stated already at the start of the first plenum. This schedule should have priority, even if the sessions and discussions are very intensive. Any extension of time limits is dangerous, since more and more participants will be leaving. Such a "breaking up bit by bit" of the group leads to feelings of anger and diffidence and distracts from interest in the theme itself. The group leader needs to keep the time structure as a whole in view, perhaps interrupting contributions to the discussion and suggesting certain forms for contributions (for example, using only one or two sentences or expressing only splitters of thought). Approximately 10 minutes before the actual ending, this should be announced (or a reminder given), thereby emphasising the necessity of concentrating on essential issues.

It is helpful at the closure of working in the plenum to reserve a moment for individual reflection. Brief summarising words or comments as to issues to consider at a future time or a poem or the expression of a particular wish are forms of such a closure.

7. Silence

Silence is an integral part of Theme-Centered Interaction: being silent in order to be aware and to allow impressions or directions to make an impression, in order to sense what is happening internally.

Why is silence so important in Theme-Centered Interaction? This becomes more understandable in relationship to the axiom and goal, "Individuals are always autonomous and interdependent at the same time – and: autonomy grows together with the aware-

ness of interdependence." Because silence makes the reflection of ourselves possible, encourages the awareness of ourselves and of what is inside each person, helps the individual be conscious of things which others are experiencing, clarifies whether the person wants to be speaking and how he/she is listening in order that what is being experienced will become usable. It is also helpful in perceiving what mood or which disturbance is residing in a person. This can often be taken as a chance for clarification or to express an opinion or to offer open feedback to others. Silence is a helpful medium to reach astonishing and unusual ideas, just as it aids in more conscious awareness of outer influences, so that they may be better integrated in one's own world.

Thus silence helps in being aware internally and externally and is an essential requirement in the unfolding of our consciousness of autonomy and interdependence and for the extension of our own limits.

Silence aids in taking possession of the theme, in integrating it into our own concepts of our lives and ourselves or in becoming aware of that which can not be integrated and to become reflective, attentive of our resistance and perhaps curious and prepared to encounter them. Silence promotes the chairperson postulate ("Lead yourself!"), because it aids in becoming aware of our own inner exertions, needs, moods, and thought processes in order finally to decide how we wish to deal with them and how we will act.

Especially in larger groups, silence is an effective instrument, since the opportunity for usual experiences within the large group is often attractive, distractions and moments of unrest may become prominent and the association to the theme can be easily coated by momentary feelings and by efforts to become oriented in a new and strange place.

Silence – when it is understood and well received – also creates a strong experience of the WE, of the common bond and of the security offered through the group, and can lead to experiencing that "being interdependent" the basis for powerful impulses and

a motivation for pursuing new paths.

Silence usually requires an explanatory introduction and good timing. For instance, a call for silence for which the reason is not clear may cause uncertainty among some participants. Many persons have never experienced silence in group work and may react with restlessness, panic or resistance.

The invitation to being silent can been connected with an expression of "permission" to centre solely on one's self, to take one's self entirely seriously, to listen to one's own internal processes, to devote the whole attentiveness to one's self and the perception of feelings and thoughts, since no one aside from one's self can really sense and know what is going on within him or her. Much can be learned through the sharing of experiences made during these phases of silence.

Impulses can be used in introducing a phase of silence, for example, "...place your awareness entirely within yourself...be aware of which word or of which picture is becoming audible or visible...of what is important to you now...", etc.

Sometimes it is good to introduce silence with an invitation to be aware of one's own bodily state of being: "...take a rest...close your eyes...be aware of any tensions...be aware of how you are sitting...relaxing...", etc. These impulses may continue during the entire phase of silence.

All directions which are given must be related to the theme, as well as to the situation, goals, time, place – i.e., they must be firmly bond up in the process, in the Here and Now. They should not be standing apart (or above) the actual process, for example, "because our preparation planning calls for it now."

It is often difficult for group leaders to judge as to the length of a particular phase of silence. In this case, it is useful to use one's own external and internal awareness: expressions of the faces of participants, their posture and bodily expressions can be used to-

gether with one's own awareness as well as one's own intuition, originating out of earlier experiences.

What are possible times/places for silence?

-At the beginning of a session after the theme has been announced, as a time for reflection about one's own relationship and one's own access to the theme;

-During a lecture or discussion in order to allow reflection about a sub-theme;

-Allowing time for a reflection as to how the present theme or sub-theme is related to past experiences, how it is presently and which ideas can be developed for the future;

-In order to reflect upon a particular question before the lecturer or another participant gives an answer;

-In order to consider the consequences of what is being talked about for one's own personal situation;

-To summarise what has been going on for one's self;

-To be aware of one's own body as an important part of what is going on and to learn to understand it's language – at the beginning, during or at the closing of a session;

-Towards the close of a session in order to collect, sort out, select, close and separate.

- All of these can be called "opposite experiences" in contrast to our everyday life, which is often hectic and events occur one right after another, making it so difficult to attain clarity and to experience one's self as the steering instance in life instead of being the ball tossed about in the game of events and processes.

8. Conclusion

The most important elements, according to experience, of structuring during the work with larger groups have been described in this chapter. Certainly, we have not been able to deal with all

details that might become important during such group work. For instance, the "guards at the door," who guarantee that a poem can be read at the beginning of the workshop without disturbances and who, at the same time, are assuring to those who are arriving late that they will be able to join into the process almost at the beginning. Also, the importance of being aware that something unplanned might endanger the planning and that the readiness to be flexible, to change plans, and to make compromises are extremely important.

However, the most important point in these concluding remarks is to remind us that working with TCI is primarily based on acting according to a sense for values, on making decisions which respect the humanity of each individual – in regard to his or her life and personal development – to which all methodological considerations are subordinate. Our central message is that this also applies to larger groups. I – WE – IT – GLOBE are the realistic factors which exist in every group and determine them, whether this is realised or not. And the concept of "dynamic balancing," the challenge to respect these factors as equally valuable provides the compass for working in all groups, large and small alike.

Chapter 19

ROUNDS IN GROUP WORK – WHEN, WHERE, HOW, WITH WHOM, WHAT, WHY?

Dr. Ruth C. Cohn

Rounds in group work aid in providing each individual participant to have an opportunity to speak. The word "round" indicates already that groups often are sitting in a circle and each person will be able to make a verbal contribution or to do something specific related to the set task. The following text was written for inclusion in a collection of articles about TCI for teachers. This has influenced the selection of some of the examples and also the terms used (pupil. classroom, etc.). However, the principles stated apply to all educational and training settings.

> Rounds are important as elements that provide structure within the free flow of interaction.

Various Kinds of Rounds

To select what kind of round is appropriate, it is important to be aware of the purpose of making a round in regard to the mo-

mentary emphasis in content and the elements of the physical and psychological situation. These include:

- the number of persons (pupils, students, trainees, etc.) and the available time
- the amount of freedom within the curriculum, ranging from flexible to rigid factors
- the age and previous education/training of the participants and teachers in the group
- the aims and goals of the educational organisation, school, college, etc.
- the extent of familiarity of the participants among each other and of their embeddedness within the immediate community and within the environment at large
- the cultural similarities and differences of the participants (language, origin, interests, educational background, etc.)
- the amount of commitment required of the participants and teachers in the group process
- available amount of room

The "Simple Round"

Example: *A new theme is being introduced at the beginning of class/lecture, etc.* The invitation for starting a round might be: Each person will please state whether he or she finds the theme interesting and what interests him/her the most.

When *this class period is coming to an end,* a round might be initiated with the question, "How do I feel about what we have just heard and/or done - contented? irritated? satisfied? ...?"

Most of the time it is appropriate to request those present to be silent for a minute or two before the round begins. If this time of silence is missing, participants are tempted to react or comment on the remarks of others who have already spoken in the round.

One's own thoughts are easily swept away by the flow of the group process. These minutes in silence are important, since being concerned with one's own thoughts adversely affects the ability to be listening. Thinking, expression of thoughts and feelings and listening to others are three different activities. Each has the best chance to succeed if one activity is not overshadowing another. It is almost impossible to be thinking clearly and to listen attentively at the same time.

The Momentary Snapshot

The Flashbulb. (Often the term "Flashbulb" is used for any type of round. Therefore, I choose to go back to my original term *"The Momentary Snapshot" for* the type of round now described.)

Contrary to the simple round, which usually entails a few minutes for reflection at the start, "the momentary snapshot" is effective because of its element of surprise. Its main value is to indicate just where the group is located in its development. This momentary snapshot requires a quick stop signal that cannot be misunderstood, such as the snapping of one's fingers. For example, I might suggest, "Relate quickly in a round what you were thinking at the moment when I gave the snapshot signal - using half a sentence or just a couple words!" If someone is speaking longer than that, then I interrupt and emphasise that the flash bulb is only a momentary snapshot and nothing more.

A momentary snapshot can show various things - for instance, whether everyone has been concentrating on the theme or whether thoughts have been wandering, perhaps to an infatuation, to an irritation about the teacher, to an incident within the group or to unfinished homework.

By *relating their distractions as well as their concentrated efforts,* those present are making visible what *is* - the momentary snapshot serves as a compass which registers how and where it is

possible to proceed and which path presently appears to be the most appropriate one. In addition, expressions occurring in the momentary snapshot support the development of the WE feeling in the group - "We get to know each other better." The flash bulb aids the teacher/group leader in being aware of the flow of the group's energy and in granting it sufficient emphasis in the further group process.

The momentary snapshot will provide information as to how a better balance can be achieved in the TCI process in situations in which any of the four factors - the I, the WE, the THEME or the GLOBE - are being stressed too little or too much.

Games Using Rounds

Instead of using rounds in a round robin style with each person speaking after his or her neighbour in the circle, games can be found or invented which involve an individual decision as to when one is to speak. This requires a plan with specific strategies. In such games the when and how each participant has a turn becomes the responsibility of the individual, while in the "simple rounds" the order is predetermined. The more possibilities and techniques in handling rounds a group leader knows or invents, the more effective and flexible - and often the more amusing - will be the rounds. When not overused, playfulness has an attraction. The domino game and the game with the ball of wool are examples.

The Domino Game

This game is especially applicable in situation in which the participants can react with their quite differing experiences and thoughts, although engaged with the same general theme.

Directions for the domino game: In playing dominoes as we know it usually, it is possible at times for the players to lay their tiles not only matching up with the number on the narrow ends, but also to connect the tile with an appropriate number along the longer sides.

Relating this to our round, now this means, for example, when we pose the well-known question concerning vacation time, the theme could be: "What did I do during my vacation? What was interesting for me?" Someone begins to relate something that was particularly interesting for him or her during the holidays, perhaps about animals, another tells about excursions with cousins, another about a book, someone else about an accident or also about how it was to just be at home. The teacher's directions might now be, "Listen very carefully to what each person is telling about their vacation time and if you experienced something similar, then it is your turn and you can speak. By the end of this domino round, hopefully everyone who wants to has taken the opportunity to speak." If not everyone has taken the chance (which is seldom), a few more questions can be posed.

Of course, this game can be used in a variety of situations and themes. For example, about books, about historical facts, about any theme which is pertinent objectively or subjectively. Exercising one's own ability to decide makes this type of round livelier for many matters than the round robin variety.

The Ball of Wool Game

This is also a type of a round which does not follow the one after another around the circle and which is usually quite animated. It is especially good in promoting the exchange of information. The beginning of a sentence might be, "I would like to know the following about you..." The person beginning the game holds a ball of wool in the hand. He or she throws it to someone from whom she or he would like to have an answer. This person, after providing an answer, will then throw the ball to another person, posing a new question or varying the above question. As the ball is passed back and forth, a network is created by the threads between the participants. Of course, the game can be simplified by using an ordinary ball, foregoing the creation of a network.

The TCI Round: The Anti-Interactional Egg

At the time that this strange-sounding term, the anti-interactional egg, was coined, I was not aware of the fact that other objects, such as a "talking stone" or a pipe, had been used with a similar meaning by the North American Indians. Ours was a polished piece of marble shaped like an egg, just the size to hold comfortably in one hand.

North American Indians have used their pipes or a "talking stone" for centuries in their discussion circles with the following purpose: only the person holding the object in his or her hand is allowed to speak - the rest are required to listen. In using our anti-interactional egg, we establish rules and set themes. With set stipulations, the egg delegates the responsibility to speak, to be quiet and to listen.

Freely flowing discussion is the essential structure of TCI. The anti-interactional egg interrupts this discussion and suspends the interactional structure for a short period of time. This operates in an interactional group similarly to punctuation marks in writing in regard to content and process. Punctuation marks - pauses, period, comma, explanation and question marks, paragraphs and capitals -form and emphasise. The anti-interactional egg does as little in destroying the process of a theme-centered interactional group as the punctuation does to the content of the written sentence. In this way, what might at first seem a disturbance in the proceedings becomes a challenge. The flow in group process tends to have an increasing power of thrust, similar to a waterfall. Allowing this phenomenon to occur is just as important as ensuring space for other things that might be neglected. Through interchanging the emphasis between what is more quiet and that which is livelier, between flexibility and consequence, between individual and collective needs, between reflection and attention to subject matter, using the anti-interactional egg enriches the progress of the process in the group.

Why a marble egg? The egg has the symbolic meaning of fertility and growth; it is pleasant to hold and not too heavy. A picture or any other object that attracts too much attention to itself is not appropriate. However, depending on the situation, other symbolic objects can be used, for instance, a pleasing stone from a particular area or an object which has won a particular meaning for the group, such as a blossom, a pine cone or a chocolate Nicolaus on the 6th of December. Neither orthodoxy nor dogmatism is a part of TCI - rituals retain their lively quality as long as they satisfy the needs of the human heart. If meaning is lacking, they are dead.

Of course, simple rounds are possible without holding an object in one's hand. The holding and passing on of an object, however, has a facilitating significance. To the extent necessary, the object seems to function as a railing to lean on. The anti-interactional egg provides those persons who are more reserved as well as those who are more dynamic with the opportunity to speak. Speaking itself should not be compulsory; rather it can be encouraged. Those who choose not to speak may pass the egg on and may, if so desired, request it back later. The anti-interactional egg is a "facilitator" and not a persecutor. The attention of the group in their process of learning will be heightened as to those who are continually quiet and those who are continually speaking. Also, it may prevent excessively long speeches by some individuals. The anti-interactional egg establishes an optimal space in time for everyone in their development, along with due respect for the space of others. It is a structural aid, which takes seriously the promotion of life with its commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." It can and should be a tool in guiding attentiveness for the individual to attentiveness for the group and/or for the task. It can help in recognising the energies of the group or of the individual and it can contribute to the group process continuing along a certain course or perhaps taking a valuable detour.

The anti-interactional egg can be put to use at various times in varying group situations. It will always be conveying a particular

invitation. A round with the egg is warranted, for instance, in a newly constituted group as a means of getting to know each other.

Using Names in Rounds (with the Anti-Interactional Egg)

To be called by one's name is essential for teachers and their students. For the teacher who is responsible for one class and spends most of his or her time with that class, this is obvious. But for teachers of subjects who meet with a class as little sometimes as once or twice a week, this is very difficult, although still desirable.

Of course, this is not applicable for large seminars and auditoriums. Hardly anyone can remember the names of a hundred or five hundred persons per session. It is however helpful to create structures even for larger assemblies - perhaps in the form of small group work - wherein there is time and space for exchanging and recalling of names.

The number of pupils/students, the time schedule, the physical surroundings in the school or university, etc., will determine the amount of time which can be made available for a round using names. De facto, I calculate the *average* length of time each person can have in order not to exceed approximately one fourth of the time in a first session with this round.

In each of these rounds with names, a particular invitation, which is usually related to the theme, is given - for example; "Do you already know some French words?" "What does the word 'ocean' suggest to you?" "What does the course title mean to me?" "Who named you? What do you know about that?" "How did you like your name as a child? How do you like it now?" etc.

It is useful for each person to state his or her name at the beginning and then again at the end of her or his contribution. And it is important to be stating that name which each person wishes to be called. Many persons tend to state all sorts of names that they do not wish to be called or to state their first and last names, which makes the matter more difficult.

A great deal has happened by the time the round with names is completed. Everyone has expressed something about himself or herself and almost no one passes the anti-interactional egg on to the next person without having at least stated their name - consequently a preliminary I-WE-IT relationship has been established in the group. A little bit is now known about each person and, in addition to the name itself, something about each person's connection with the given theme. Beginning in such a fashion also illustrates that every person in the room is important and that we will be respecting one another.

Most of the time I will request another brief round with names after this first one in which each participant repeats his or her name and - after a pause of two seconds - the next one in the round says her or his. It is amazing that almost everyone knows the names of everyone else after this second round, at least in groups of 20 to 26 individuals.

Beginning Rounds

I often use the anti-interactional egg for the beginning round in TCI groups, in classroom settings and in team meetings. According to the openness of the group, the commitment in their relationships and the ratio between time, assignment and interests, I start up the day or the classroom session with a short round. I ask about how they are feeling or ask whether anyone present has something urgent to say. The purpose is for each person to find out, "In my present condition, am I capable and willing for our work and interaction?" If there is little time and many persons, I might say, for instance, "Please state in three to five words what you are experiencing right now." Thus, everyone is given the opportunity to decide whether there is something important "to be gotten rid of" before the work which has been scheduled begins. This "getting rid of" is recognition of the fact that disturbances and passionate involvements should take precedence. This is almost always beneficial for the work process and for the atmosphere in the group - especially for the person involved.

A group member or classmate who withdraws from the group as a whole remains a missing link in the chain. Even if the disturbance that has been identified cannot be resolved, the fact that this person has received attention is temporarily helpful and often leads to clarification. Should a participant remain constantly disturbed, other help should be offered, for instance, the opportunity for a private talk or a recommendation to seek counselling.

The round beginning any working day has become a ritual for me. I hardly ever do without it. This fact alone helps me and those studying to realise that we all count. We, each and every one of us, as well as our task.

In certain situations a second round seems advisable after the first. While the first is concerned basically with the group's mood and possible disturbances and/or preferences, the second round is valuable in regard to the subject we are working on. I almost always use this in supervision sessions and in case studies in order to determine what the participants want to work on. The same is true for the breaking up of a larger group into smaller groups to work on specific problems. A second round is useful in determining the specific interests of students at such times, for example, when topics are being distributed, when books and articles to be read are being decided upon, when subgroups are being formed or when searching for new ideas. It is also possible to ask about the students' previous knowledge in certain areas that are being considered or to inquire about their opinions about the theme(s).

Sometimes it is also effective to place the anti-interactional egg in the middle of the circle instead of passing it around. Someone can take it of his or her own volition or be given it by someone else. Only the person possessing the egg is allowed to speak, thus providing the opportunity to enter into the discussion more easily - but, of course, only as a supporting measure and not in order to sabotage the chairpersonship principle!

The anti-interactional egg offers the opportunity to turn inward. I sometimes even use the egg as an interruption during a seminar session or class. This promotes perception inwardly as well as outwardly and helps us recognise where we stand at a particular moment in regard to ourselves, to the others and to the theme. It serves as a small pilot boat guiding the larger ship of the group.

Chapter 20

IMPLEMENTING TCI GROUP WORK THROUGH EXERCISES AND TECHNIQUES

Irene Klein

Theme-Centered-Interaction (TCI) is a method of working with groups in educational, business and therapeutic settings where learning processes among the participants are being initiated and supported by the group leader(s). Significant among the skills of the group leader(s) is her or his attitude and manner of approach in dealing with the varying and developing situations in the group. As well as setting appropriate structures (time budgeting, choice of theme and sub-themes, working in plenum or dividing up into smaller groups), the leader(s) is responsible for choosing and introducing exercises and techniques which aid in determining, deepening and realising the purposes of the task at hand.

It is important to keep in mind that exercises and techniques are not a part of the TCI method itself, although there are many which have become a part of the repertoire of most TCI group leaders. They belong rather to a much larger category. These exercises and techniques can be used

within the framework of most group methods, such as consultations, Gestalt, sensitivity training, traditional school classes, group dynamics, Transactional Analysis, all forms of adult education, etc. They can also be used effectively in TCI groups - that is, with some special considerations.

In the following excerpts translated from a German handbook for group leaders, Mrs. Irene Klein, a TCI group leader, elaborates on this distinction and also gives some specific suggestions as to using exercises and techniques. (Ed.'s note)

Both self-sufficiency and the capacity for community grow through the experiences I have made personally with being self-sufficient and living in a community. These two concepts are at the same time the goal of group work, as well as the way in which this goal is being reached.

- I become autonomous through the process of learning in concrete situations to be true to myself, to speak for myself, to realise and be aware of my thoughts and feelings, to represent my position when dealing with others, etc.

- I become capable of community . . . through living and working with others; through accepting their positions alongside my own; through the practice of finding solutions which are acceptable to all; through learning to accept that there are not always "easy" solutions to every situation or problem, etc.

Therefore, it is important to set aside time and plan opportunities in the group work for practising and learning this. This can be accomplished only through activating the participants and through their self-sufficient participation in organising the group work.

In this chapter, therefore, I want to describe a few "participant-activating exercises and techniques". "Exercises and techniques"

in this sense are ways, steps or impulses which cause something to happen. The fundamental goal lies in getting the participants to be more active in the group work and process, so that their own development will be furthered.

1. Exercises and Techniques and Their Context

Exercises and techniques should be selected for their application in group work according to the criteria of simplicity and practicability. That means:

* they require little preparation;
* they are not complicated;
* materials, if required at all, are few and easy to come by;
* they can be varied and modified and thus used for a various number of topics;
* even a relatively inexperienced group leader can handle them.

I would like to make an additional comment about the last-named criterion. When a group leader decides to use an exercise or a technique, even if it is a "simple" one, as suggested above, he or she should assess the situation by asking the following questions:

* How does this exercise or technique fit in with the previous experiences and background of the individual participants and the group as a whole? Will it prove helpful and productive - or might it prove too demanding or constraining?

* How does this exercise or technique fit in with my previous experience and background? Will I be able to introduce it effectively? Am I convinced that it will prove useful in reaching the set goal? Am I being too demanding of myself? Are the participants likely to accept my choice?

These reflections are very important, because not every approach leads automatically to a certain goal - only an approach that is correlated to the starting position and situation of the persons involved.

The same is true in other areas.

Example:

If a group of hikers want to reach a particular goal, then they will have to consider the place where they are starting from as well as the capabilities of those involved in their choice of an appropriate path.

In applying this to the question of choosing exercises and techniques, that means: decisions should correspond to the previous experience and background (of the participants and of the leaders), otherwise the desired goal is not reachable.

My intention here is to make a strong case for a very careful selection in regard to exercises and techniques. Whoever uses them should be aware of their possible effects and should keep an eye on their requirements. Otherwise, a group could become involved in processes that they cannot deal with or an individual participant might become confronted with problems that require the protection and help of a professional therapist. (Even if the group leader is also a therapist professionally, his role as a group leader in an educational setting limits his being able to use these skills individually.)

Therefore, responsible decisions on the part of the group leader in this regard are central to the educational task at hand.

2. A Scheme for Reflecting on Exercises/Techniques

In order to reflect upon the selection and use of exercises and techniques within the framework of TCI group work, I have developed the following scheme in the form of a list of points to consider. Reflecting with these points in mind is of particular importance if I am serious about respecting the principle of "dynamic balance" in the group process.

(1) An example or a situation in which the exercise or technique is to be used.

(2) Description of the intended exercise or technique.

(3) Which goals can be reached by using this exercise or technique? Which dimension of the TCI-triangle (I-WE-THEME) will be principally involved?

The question also means:

Which goals are already contained in the "exercise/technique itself"? That is: every exercise/technique will cause effects, independent of how or in what connection it is used in the group work. Therefore, the goals that are inherent in the exercise/technique itself should correspond with the goals that are being set for the group work at that particular time and in relationship to the general theme.

Example:

The purpose of meditation is to bring a person into an intense contact with himself or with an object, so that holistic perception is possible. Meditation occurs within the depths of the individual.

Therefore, meditation as a technique is hardly appropriate in determining causal relationships, such as "The Causes of Unemployment Among Young Adults".

Or:

If children are expected to "grasp" the meaning of the concepts "hard" and "soft", then an exercise in which they experience this "grasping" (handling objects) is appropriate. Using the technique of "lecturing" would be quite inefficient.

(4) What preparations on the part of the group leader and the participants are necessary?

(5) What requires attention during the exercise or when using the technique?

(6) What follow-up procedures are necessary and/or desirable?

(7) When and how can the exercise/technique be used otherwise?

(8) What materials are required?

3. Using the Scheme - Example: "Flashbulb"

The following example, the "flashbulb" gives priority to the WE dimension. In the description of the set goal (point number 3), however, it is obvious that the other TCI dimensions (I and THEME) are always involved, despite the momentary focus on one of them. Most exercises and techniques emphasise one of the three dimensions. For instance, guided fantasies give priority to the I, whereas brainstorming gives priority to the THEME.

(1) An example or a situation in which the exercise or technique is to be used.

During an in-service training seminar for teachers, the discussion bogs down and the interest level is low. Some participants are not following the discussion.

(2) Description of the intended exercise or technique.

The group leader interrupts the discussion with a request for a "flashbulb". There is a break in the thematic group discussion while the exercise is being conducted.

Each person reflects, at first for himself alone, upon how he feels at the moment and what his thoughts are about the present situation (a momentary snapshot).

Rules: In a round-robin style, each person shares what he wants to about the "momentary snapshot"; if he doesn't want to share anything, then he states that. The sharing should be in the "I" form, i.e., "I feel uncomfortable for some time, because the discussion . . ." Generalisations often appear to be "objective" evaluations; however, the ideas in them are expressing subjective states of feeling. Everyone listens to each statement. A short pause between each participant's contribution allows the next person time to

concentrate on what he wants to say. Additional comments, discussion, etc. are not allowed. Discussion and feedback are allowed only after everyone in the circle has spoken.

These rules are not absolute. It is up to the creativity of the group leader to adapt them or create new rules insofar as they are not contra-productive to the main goal. For instance, limiting the number of words or sentences allowed could sharpen the focus in the flashbulb. Or, a stone or another object could be passed around; whoever has the stone expresses his thoughts and feelings.

(3) Which goals can be reached by using this exercise or technique? Which dimension of the TCI-triangle (I-WE-THEME) will be principally involved?

* It can and should clarify the position of the individual participants, which feelings and thoughts are present, and the momentary situation in the group. (I - WE)

* The existence of differing feelings and perceptions, which are considered equal to one another, is registered. This can broaden one's own views, provide insights into the world of feelings of other persons, lead to deeper understandings, etc. (WE)

* The previous "stuck in a rut" situation in the group is dissolved and a fresh approach to the theme is possible. Disturbances find expression and can be dealt with. (I - WE -THEME)

* Participants learn to express their thoughts and feelings at times when it is important for them or for the group to do so. And of course it is possible and meaningful to be doing this even if a "flashbulb" has not been officially announced. (I - WE)

* All participants practice their perception skills, in perceiving themselves inwardly and expressing themselves selectively and authentically outwardly, as well as noticing and respecting differences. (I - WE)

(4) What preparations on the part of the group leader and

the participants are necessary?

Since personal feelings are involved, the flashbulb exercise can produce fear in the participants. Many have not learned to express their feelings and often such expression is "punished" in everyday situations by contradiction, discounting, denial, ironic remarks, laughing, etc. Therefore, the best preparation consists in building up an atmosphere of acceptance and security within the group and the exact following of the rules. Participants should have at least a willingness to be open with each other. The less self-conscious the participants are with one another usually, the more likely they will be to talk about their feelings in a well-structured situation.

Above all, the group leader needs to trust this technique himself and to be deliberate in introducing the exercise. If he is uncertain, that will reinforce uncertainty among the participants and they will be unlikely to "risk" self-expression. The leader should not be angry or offended if his suggestion to do a "flash-bulb" is not accepted or is sabotaged by non-expressive statements by the participants.

(5) What requires attention during the exercise or use of the technique?

* Stating the meaning and goal of the flashbulb exercise and also the voluntary nature of what each person says. (TCI rule: Take each moment as an occasion for your deciding; be authentic and selective.)

* The leader should state his contribution to the exercise in simple language and express his own feelings. His behaviour is a role model.

If he uses complicated, indirect language, the participants are likely to have difficulty expressing themselves.

* Encouragement and support is helpful on two levels:

- in being open and curious and ready "to just try it out";

- when someone really does not want to say anything, in standing up to this position and informing others of it.

* Taking care that there is a pause between the individual contributions and being firm about using the "I" form.

* Flashbulbs sometimes develop into stereotyped repetitions of nonexpressive statements of feelings, such as, "So far, I'm feeling fine."

Reasons for this vary: parroting another participant; a low-grade present conflict which weighs on the group and limits their open expression; fear of being "punished" outside the group, for example through gossiping; fear of being aware of one's own feelings or lack of ability to express them, etc. The leader can express his own observations - however, this may make the situation more difficult or heighten self-consciousness. At a renewed opportunity the leader can introduce another exercise or technique (perhaps of a more anonymous nature) in order to get the group discussion going again.

(6) What follow-up procedures are necessary?

The meaning and goal of the flashbulb exercise is making the emotional and mental status quo of the group accessible. The exercise is over when each participant has had the opportunity to make his or her statement. Often, however, the desire to talk about the expressed emotions and opinions arises, to request more information from someone, to analyse differing views, or even to make a basic analysis of the situation or to give and receive feedback. It is important that the group makes such decisions consciously and that the main issue remains the desire to listen and to share in exchange with one another. Otherwise the discussion could easily end in a struggle as to which of the expressed feelings or perceptions are the "right" ones. It is proper if someone corrects his own previous opinion because of new information he re-

ceives from others, but he should not be forcefully persuaded to do so. One of the most important elements of such discussions is the mutual bearing of differences and dichotomies. That the members of a group perceive and feel differently in a given situation *is* reality.

Working in groups provides the opportunity to learn about this.

(7) When and how can the exercise/technique be used otherwise?

* The flashbulb exercise can be used at the beginning of a seminar.

Each person provides the others with information that will facilitate the process of getting to know one another. An example of an appropriate theme is, "Where am I at the moment, internally? What have I brought along?

* Similarly, the seminar could end with this exercise. A possible theme: "What have I experienced here? What am I taking along?"

* Basically, this exercise is appropriate in any situation in which the issue is the mutual learning about thoughts and feelings of the group members.

And it is also important not to use the flashbulb exercise too often, because it might become too much of a routine.

(8) What materials are required?

None.

Chapter 21

SELECTED EXERCISES

Mary Anne Kuebel (Compiler)

The following are exercises that are often used in the framework of TCI group processes. The use of "Rounds in Group Work" is thoroughly discussed by Dr. Ruth C. Cohn in the article of the same name. The Flashbulb exercise is analysed at length in the article by Irene Klein, "Implementing TCI Group Work Through Exercises and Techniques."

Concentric Circles

This exercise is appropriate at the beginning of a seminar or also at a later time, when the occasion calls for a re-orientation of goals or more intensive contact among the participants. A side effect is an increase in the energy level in the group.

Participants: At least 12 persons

Directions:

There are as many chairs as participants. Half of the chairs form an inner circle facing outwards. The other half forms an outer

circle and face towards the middle. The chairs from both circles are paired up with one another. Each participant selects his own place and sits opposite a partner. Now the first topic is announced (see list below) and each person has exactly one minute to talk to his or her partner about it. The group leader gives the signal after one minute that the partners switch, so that the second person has a chance to make her or his contribution. After the two minutes are up, the group leader requests everyone in the inner circle (or the outer circle) to move one seat to the right (or the left). This is repeated until the list of topics is exhausted. Of course, the directions for the movement in the concentric circles can be varied, but it is important that each participant has an exchange with every (or nearly every) other person in the group.

The list of topics will vary according to the situation and the goals at that particular time. For instance, in a getting-to-know-each-other phase such questions as, "State your name and tell of associations you have with it," "What were you thinking when you entered the seminar room for the first session," or "Describe the place where you work" are appropriate.

The following list of topics was developed for a seminar in "Developing Your Potential". There were 18 participants. In using 10 topics, the first and last partner was identical. The purpose was to aid the participants in focussing on aspects of their personal potential, since the next step in the group work involved setting specific goals.

1) What were your first thoughts when you woke up this morning (or shortly afterwards)?

2) Describe an important occurrence in your childhood in which you felt your own potential strongly?

3) During the time of your youth, which person impressed you deeply because she or he was a model in living her or his potential?

4) Describe an activity at the beginning of your professional life

or otherwise in your life before your 30th birthday, in which you felt your potential unconditionally.

5) What can you do particularly well which is especially useful in your present work or in your present everyday life?

6) If you were to be allowed to wish something for your work or for your everyday life - what would that be?

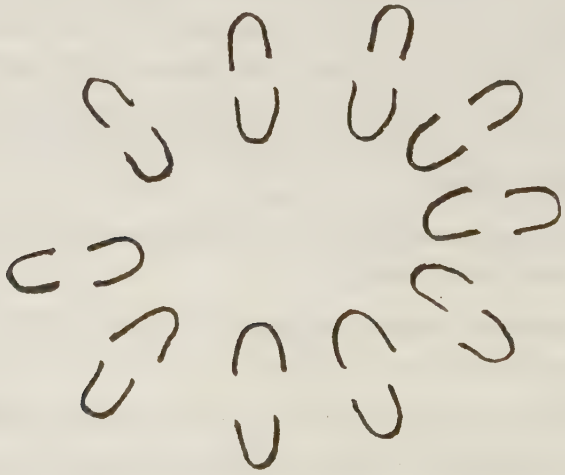
7) What are you setting as your very personal goal in this workshop?

8) What would you like to try out in this workshop and what are you willing to do?

9) What do you think of this round of changing topics and partners?

10) In all of these brief exchanges with the others, what was your most important thought? Your most important feeling?

Any further evaluation of this exercise in the group should be kept brief. The high level of energy that has arisen should flow into the next step in the planning.



Chair arrangement for concentric circles

Weaving a Net

This exercise supports visually the awareness in the group of the interrelatedness of the participants. Also, everyone participates on an equal basis, increasing through his or her contribution to the pool of common information which all group members share about each other.

Directions

The group leader has a large ball of yarn. Everyone is sitting with his or her chairs in a circle. A few points to focus on are stated. In a beginning situation, for example: Who am I?; what do I like to do?; what am I expecting here?; what sort of group experience do I have up until now?

The group leader starts by telling about himself or herself. (It is important to make the statements in the "I" form - his or her way of telling is a model for the others!) Then, holding the one end of the yarn securely, he or she throws the ball to one of the other participants. This person then tells about himself or herself holds the yarn again securely and throws the ball to another person. In the process of tossing the ball back and forth, a woven net is formed within the circle, which becomes a visible sign of how relationships can form within the group - each person relates something of himself or herself and then gives his or her attention to the next person . . . The network also represents a picture of how the group will grow together (or, if the exercise comes towards the end, how they have grown together).

During the exercise, it is important to call the participants' attention to the tension in the yarn stretching from one person to another. Some playful pulling back and forth can ensue.

Follow-Ups and Variations

There are many possibilities of continuing on with this exercise, for instance:

* The leader requests the participants to play around a bit with the yarn: each person can pull on his or her place on the yarn and experiment around. What happens when I do something - who is affected as well? What associations do I have while this is happening? Some developments in the group process can become more conscious.

* A discussion might follow about what would have to happen in the group and what each individual would have to do, if this picture of a network were to become reality in the group. What does each person require - what can he or she contribute? This might lead to formulating common rules (in the form of wishes) for this group.

* The net can be unravelled in the following fashion: the last person throws the ball back to the person who had thrown it to him or her and calls him or her by name.

Choosing a Picture

This exercise is appropriate in situations in which the theme or task, or a sub-topic thereof, is being introduced or a fresh approach to an already present one is sought. Finding a personal relationship or "access" to the theme can be facilitated by first determining what a particular picture expresses to me in terms of the theme ("I"), the next step being a sharing in the group ("We"). These two steps may then lead to a phase, in which the theme ("It") is handled more cognitively in the group work.

A collection of pictures and/or photos with varying motives, 2 to 3 times as many as the number of participants, are the basis for this exercise. They may be a collection of pictures from calendars, from newspapers, photos, etc. They are to be spread out on the floor and the participants can walk around, becoming aware of the different motives in the pictures. According to a certain theme

or key word - for example, "Peace" - each person is to select a picture which expresses something to him or her concerning this theme. It helps if the objective theme can be formulated with a personal question - for example, "What does peace mean to me?" or "When do I experience peace?" or "What do I imagine peace looks like?" etc.

After everyone has had a chance to look at all the pictures - and this should be done in silence - each selects one picture and returns to his or her seat. In the ensuing round, each participant says something about the picture selected and the motivations involved in the selection.

Thus the situation has been so structured that each person has developed some idea(s) connected to the theme and the sharing has made him or her part of the common information in the group. The theme can subsequently be dealt with more thoroughly on the cognitive level through lecturing and discussion or by means of working in small groups on prepared questions. This technique requires time and is not appropriate for shorter meetings. The process tends to be intense and reaches into the deeper regions of the person. It is applicable to a very broad range of topics, for instance:

- communication in the family
- using the principle of "self-help"
- resolving conflicts
- using my time effectively
- my evaluation of this group up to this time
- my work situation in the immediate future
- relationships in my organisation

Often particular group situations will require that some introductory comments be made concerning pictures and pictorial language (symbols, metaphors, etc.), since the participants may be unaccustomed to seeing pictures as expressions of thoughts, feelings or attitudes. The leader can facilitate this understanding by

using examples from another subject area. The definite advantage of using pictures and pictorial language is that they spurn on the process of thinking, allowing each individual to experience those thematic elements already present within himself or herself.

A further option in choosing pictures is working with them in small groups. Three to five participants form small groups (according to whatever system is fitting at that time) and each person selects from the picture pool two or three pictures to be considered by his or her sub-group. The participants present their choice of pictures to each other in the sub-group. They then make a mutual decision about which of these pictures is the "best" one in respect to the theme. A thorough and differentiated discussion results in the process of reaching a decision. The selected picture can be further discussed in plenum.

Fruit Basket

Purpose/Goals

For general fun; for relaxing physically after an intense working session; as a "punctuation mark" between two sessions. The inner children of the participants (and the leader!) can thus be activated to more alertness and creative awareness for the coming agenda.

Participants

Best with groups numbering 15 participants and more. Minimum age for children: 10.

Time

Up to 10 minutes. Add a few minutes for sharing in the group if that seems desirable.

Directions

Chairs are placed close together in a circle. The group leader takes his place in the middle and supervises the distribution of the "roles" in the fruit basket game. First of all, the sort of fruit in the basket - one sort for approximately every four participants. The

participants make the suggestions and assume the identity of one of the fruit sorts. For instance, in a group with 15 participants, four might be bananas, four cherries, four mangoes and three apples.

There is always one chair less than the total number of participants. The task of the person in the middle is to try to occupy a chair by calling out the name of a particular kind of fruit. The persons in the circle with that identity must then quickly change places. For instance, "All cherries change places!" During the rush of those persons to change places, the person in the middle has the chance to sit down on one of the chairs which has become empty. If he or she is not successful the first time, then another sort of fruit can be chosen - until he or she has a seat in the circle.

It is also possible to call out loudly, "Fruit Basket!" - whereupon all persons must change their places. Hint: it is helpful to limit the use of this possibility. For instance, only every third round.

Variations

It is possible to use any number of topics for this game. For example, different kinds of fish in an aquarium or different kinds of birds in aviary. Or the categories may have a direct relationship to themes being discussed. It is best to allow the group to be creative in determining the objects in a category. Avoid any that refer to persons (mother, employer, teacher, etc.)

ABC Structure - for Resolving Issues and Problem Solving

This exercise is very flexible and can be adapted to a variety of situations in which clarification of a particular situation or the formulation of goals and/or planned action is required. The participants become involved in a mutual support system in small groups of three persons, aiding one another in resolving a particular issue or in solving a problem. Since the time is limited, attention is focussed

and the energy level and creativity involved generally high. Goals: developing sensitivity for the different roles in a consulting situation; improving skills in problem solving; promoting creativity and spontaneity; recognising behaviour patterns and strategies and becoming more flexible and versatile in one's own behaviour.

Required time: approx. 75 - 90 minutes.

Groups of three participants each can be formed before or after the general instructions. In each group there should be a watch with a second hand.

Each of the three persons in a group will have the opportunity to assume the role of A, B, and C.

Role A: is the person with an issue to be resolved; has the task of presenting his or her "problem" and explaining how he or she intends to solve it.

Role B: is the person giving advice and providing support through his or her questions; is focussed on helping person Ato discover his or her own answers.

Role C: is the observing person; is silent during the consultation and provides feedback during the last 5 minutes; keeps time.

First phase: the roles are divided among the three persons. 10 minutes are allotted for A and B to be consulting on the issue. Person A states his "problem" and person B is the consultant. Subsequently, 5 minutes will be spent on feedback among the three persons, including person C.

Second phase: roles are switched and the 2nd person experiences consultation and feedback for his or her "problem."

Third phase: again the roles are switched, so that each person

has the opportunity of experiencing each of the roles.

The group leader goes from group to group, giving support, supervising the process, and answering questions.

After the necessary 45+ minutes, the group assembles again as a plenum. The discussion can be introduced with the questions: "What would I like to share with you?" - "How comfortable was this experience for me?" - "Which was my favourite role? - Which one was more difficult?" - "What would I change if we did the exercise again?"

"How does this experience relate to my work situation?"

Examples of situations in groups where this structure can be effective:

- Workshop in Self Esteem: Role A presents his or her struggle with maintaining a high self-esteem. Or Role A might present his or her plans to aid others in developing a high self-esteem.

- Workshop in Sustainable Development: Role A elaborates a plan to implement the concepts he or she has been learning in the workshop after returning to his or her own project.

- Workshop on Project Management: Role A has the task of describing the "ideal project manager."

- Workshop on Leadership Skills: Role A describes a specific difficult situation as a leader and what strategy he or she intends to take to deal with it.

In each situation, Role B will be the critical questioner, eliciting a positive development in discovering solutions by the person he or she is consulting. Role C, as an observer not involved verbally in the initial phase, provides feedback to the effectiveness of the behaviour of persons A and B in their roles.

It is important to be aware of the fact that each is assuming different roles during the exercise. Empathy for

the conditions of each of these roles is to be encouraged.

Three-Cornered Contract

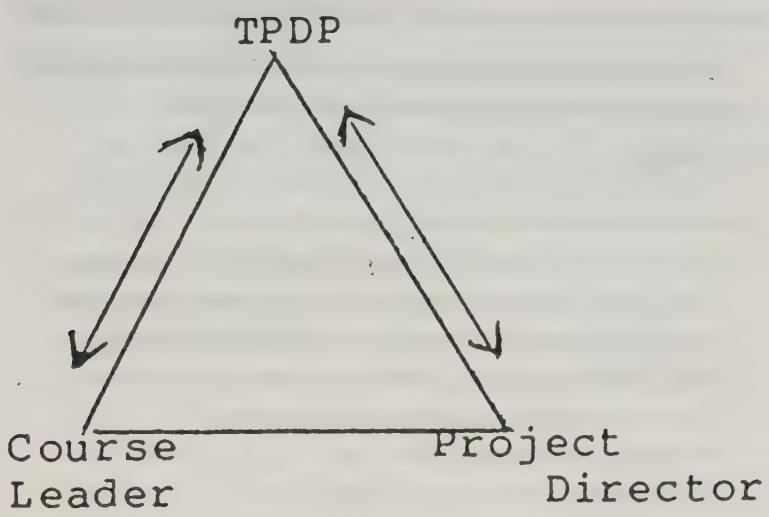
(An original concept from: Fanita English, M.S.W.)

In Transactional Analysis (TA) theory, a contract is a mutual agreement between two parties. A contract should be clear, concise and direct, rather than vague or generalised. Also, it should be realistic, with an achievable goal. For the best results, contracts are negotiated directly between the two parties.

In many situations of daily life, however, agreements (contracts) are made without the two parties being present, thereby making immediate and direct negotiation between the parties impossible. This is often true when a person registers for a course with an institution. The institution in turn has made agreements with a group leader for this course. During the time before course begins, the institution and the prospective participant will exchange information and agree upon certain terms: place, time, proposed content, fee, etc. The participant and the course leader(s), however, will probably meet with each other for the first time at the beginning of the first session of the course.

One of the factors that a group leader needs to learn to deal with is related to the phenomena of this "three-cornered contract." In order to guarantee satisfaction and the attainment of set goals, as well as preventing disappointment and anger, the contract partners - in this case the group leader(s) and the participants - need to have the opportunity and time to "negotiate" with one another directly. Such negotiations are most efficient at the beginning of the course and of the group process.

On 16 January 1997 Fanita English led a "Feedback Session on TCI and TA Methodology in Training Programmes" for 13 course leaders in the TPDP Conference Hall, Coimbatore. TPDP is a training organisation. Professor Thomas Abraham summed up the content in a brief report as follows:



"During the morning session Fanita presented the model of "Three cornered Contract" as a relevant concept for TPDP. In the programmes organised by TPDP the three corners are as shown below:

This triangle (three cornered representation) indicates that there is a contract (understanding or agreement) between the TPDP and the course leader on one side; on the other side there is a similar contract between TPDP and the Project Director to whom the communications regarding the training programme are sent. There is no direct contract between the course leader and the project director. The contract is via TPDP only.

When the programme is being given by the Course Leader, there is another three cornered contract coming into existence, as shown below:

The Course leader interacts with the participants to understand their expectations as individuals, as well as what they have been told by the project directors to expect from the course leader. His understanding of the Project Directors' expectations is also de-

rived from two sources, namely the TPDP and the Participants.

Unless these multi-level contracts become a consensual reality, we cannot expect the programme to be successful.

Trust Walk

> This exercise is best when performed outside. Encourage the participants to be taking a few risks, both as the person leading and the person being led. Various themes can be introduced in order to give the exercise the necessary focus:
> "My experience of leading and of being led"
> "Trusting you and myself"
> "Realising the world without sight", etc.

Required time: approx. 1 hr. (for introduction, trust walk and reflection)

Directions:

Participants decide with which partner they wish to experience this exercise with. In two phases, first one participant leads the other - then the roles are reversed. The person being led closes his/her eyes during that time. The person leading stands to the left side and slightly behind the person being led, places his/her right hand lightly on the right shoulder of that person, while holding the left hand, also lightly, in his/her own left hand (palm to palm, with the leader's hand beneath).

The leader chooses where the pair will be walking - also the speed, etc. - and will be seeking a rapport with the person being led so that an appropriate understanding will be possible. 10 - 15 minutes for the experience in each of the roles is sufficient, according to the theme and the environment.

This is an excellent exercise to use in connection with the issue

of the role of the group leader.

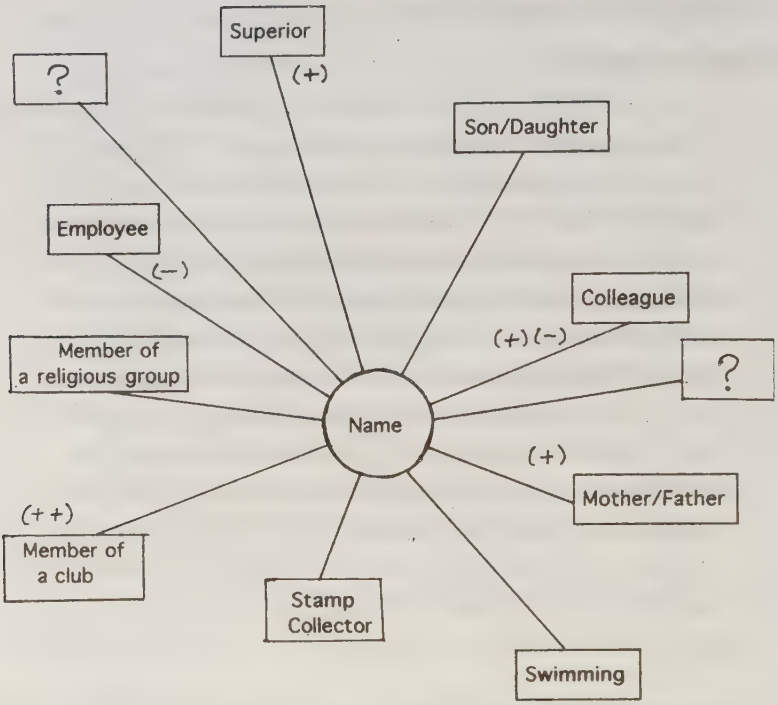
Identity Analysis

A basic question for us as human beings is, "Who am I?" This exercise can help clarify aspects of this question and thus lead to the solution of conflict or problem situations in relationships with others. Participants are challenged to see themselves as a bundle of identities. In each sub-identity lies a potential that is already being realised by the person or which can be realised more fully. Also, participants can be encouraged to transfer the potential they are realising in a particular role (i.e., that of a loving, nurturing father) into another role of their everyday life (i.e., that of a good fellow worker). Basically, this exercise is one in learning to identify, expand and manage one's own inner resources.

Material: Blocks with blank drawing paper, approx. 18 x 24 inches; coloured crayons.

This exercise can be used within a variety of themes. Examples: "How am I realising my potential?" "What resources do I already have which can help me in my work?" "Getting better acquainted with myself as a tool for better relationships", etc.

The group leader explains how to draw the analysis by using an example, preferably his or her own, on a large poster or flip chart paper. First a circle is drawn in the middle and the name of the person is written within the circle. Then lines are drawn towards the extremities of the paper and boxes or additional circles are attached to them that represent the various roles the person has. They will include such categories as: son/daughter; father/mother; husband/wife; brother/sister; colleague/co-worker; employer; employee; member of a congregation; member of a particular pro-



Possible areas of attention for an identity analysis

fession (teacher, doctor, etc.); a person interested in various hobbies and leisure activities (reading, bicycling, photography, etc.). Naming examples of other categories should be encouraged. Participants may use different colours to represent different qualities in their roles. Also, the arrangements of the elements in the drawing might indicate the importance or lack of importance of the different roles. The participants should be encouraged how they wish to express their identify within this basic framework. With plus (+) and minus (-) signs, the strengths and weaknesses of the persons in each role can be designated. Participants are given approx. 10 minutes to make their drawing. Then they are to discuss their analysis with a partner for an additional 10-15 minutes.

Structure for this discussion: each participant introduces and explains his analysis to his/her partner and the partner seeks clarification through asking questions. Then the roles are switched.

A group discussion follows in the plenum during which the following questions might be pertinent: "What have I learned about myself?"; "How can I better manage my strengths (and thus also my weaknesses)?"; "Who am I - at which time, in which situation, with which persons?"; "What insights have I gained which will aid me in my work situation?"

Fairy Tale

This exercise activates the creative and child-like sides in the participants. It also aids the individual in becoming more aware of non-conscious or partially conscious tendencies in his or her life history and behavioural patterns. It also provides participants with an experience in which they can observe and later evaluate their own personality traits in reference to being either more assertive or more passive,more a leader or more a follower, more cooperative or more domineering, and so on. Thus it can tie into on-going themes in the group work. It is a good activity to wind up the day's program, especially if an evening session is planned. The follow-up exercise can be scheduled for the following morning, if that seems more appropriate.

Participants: Optimally 16 to 24 participants in small groups of 3 or 4 persons.

Materials: Large sheets of paper (flip-chart size), crayons or felt pens of varying colours.

Time: About 1-1/2 hours, if there are 4 sub-groups (add some time if there are more)

Directions

"Fairy tales are well-known for their symbolic character. They also contain messages, such as 'The weaker person always has a chance (mostly through his or her cleverness),' 'Parents sometimes misjudge their own children,' or 'Taking a risk can be important.' (Perhaps ask the participants for more examples.) We also know that children generally love fairy tales.

Therefore, I want to suggest the following activity: we will divide up into groups and each group will write its own fairy tale. Each group will then decide how they want to perform their fairy tale before the whole group and will make preparations and perhaps rehearse a bit for the performance. Then we will come back together to enjoy each other's fairy tales.

I have some directions for writing the fairy tale itself. Here are some large sheets of paper and some crayons (or felt pens - preferably writing utensils that produce thicker, 'childlike', lines). When you have divided up into groups and have found a good spot to be writing, then one person will begin the fairy tale by writing the first sentence. Another person in your group will then write the next sentence, without consulting with the other members of the group. This continues until everyone in the group (three or four persons) has had a chance. Then the person who was first continues. Also: each persons selects a colour to write with, which differs from the colours the others are using, and writes all of his or her sentences with that colour. There is to be no verbal exchange during the writing. Nevertheless it is important to try to keep the story line going on, even if you cannot control what the person before or after you is going to write. The fairy tale should come to an end when each person has had a chance to contribute about 5 - 6 sentences. Take up to 20 minutes for this part of the activity. Then you will have time to share with each other about your experiences. Try to keep this part brief, as we will be meeting here again in 45 minutes and you will need the time for preparing the world

premiere of your fairy tale here in front of the entire group. If you need some props for this, look around as to what you might use - but don't make it too complicated."

Even though the time allotments have been clearly stated, it is important in this activity to be flexible in order to give the creative "child within" enough space.

During the performances, questions from the audience should be limited to those that ask for information. After all of fairy tales have been performed, a break will be needed. If it is already later in the day or evening, a reflection can be made on the following morning.

Points for an evaluative discussion

- In the process of writing, sharing and taking part in the performance, what were my feelings?
- What was easy for me, what more difficult in this activity?
- Did childhood memories intrude on my thoughts? What do I make of that?
- Did I feel comfortable with the others in my group?
- Do I consider this activity useful in the framework of the course? Why, or why not?
- Are there "loose ends"? How am I going to deal with them?

Follow-Up Exercise (very worthwhile, provided there is time)

The participants are asked to look at the sentences that they contributed to their group's fairy tale. It might be helpful if they write these sentences separately on a piece of paper.

Volunteers are requested to read their connected sentences for the entire group. Afterwards they are asked to consider whether this "story within a story" seems to have a special meaning in itself. Perhaps there is a certain "theme" which is connected to the person's life in general ("I see myself as a monkey, always playing tricks", "I'm continually involved in solving other people's problems" - the list of possibilities is at least as long as the number of participants).

A volunteer can also request ideas from the other members of the group. It is important to remember that these ideas are a form of interpretation and that the individual is the only source who could verify them. To avoid too much insistence from self-appointed experts in the group, it is often helpful to structure this feedback as a ritual. For instance, "When I hear your sentences, I have the idea that . . . (expression of own thoughts) and I know that you alone have the key to the true meaning." Whereupon the person receiving the feedback replies, "Thank you for the gift of your thoughts. I will consider them, but cannot promise that I will accept them as mine."

A Nature Walk
In the Tradition of the Native Americans
(North American Indians)

Go out into your natural surroundings, preferably away from signs of human dwellings. This nature walk is in two parts, both of which can be used as separate events.

Native Americans (North American Indians) who dwelt in the woodland areas had the habit of walking single file through their natural settings. In the English language this became known as "Indian file." Also, they were known to have walked so that they tread in the footsteps of their predecessors. This custom has at least two meanings. Firstly, respect towards nature and growing things was expressed by the effort not to tread down growing things more than necessary. Additionally, with this practice they could conceal their actual numbers, which was probably tactically clever during times of unrest or warfare.

The walk begins with the participants lining up in a single file. The preceding information concerning Native Americans is given then.

"Now we will have an experience similar to that of those Native Americans. Of course, there is always a leader who determines the path taken. I will be the first leader, and this feather (stone, leaf, etc.) is the sign that I am designated as such. As I

walk along, each will follow the person in front of him or her and attempt to tread in the same footsteps. After a while I will pass my feather on to the next person, who then becomes the leader. When the group has passed by, I will join in at the end of the file. After everyone has had a chance to experience the role of being the leader, we will form a circle and I have a few words of wisdom from the beliefs of the Native Americans to share with you."

After the circle has been formed:

"We will now experience the strengths which each of the four directions express."

The participants are requested to face towards each of the four directions, and the following texts are read, with a pause between for reflection:

East: The element air belongs to the East - the universal, divine, creative spirit - intuition and ideas, within myself and within everything. The eagle is the symbolic animal of the East. The eagle, who carry their young upon their backs when they are learning to fly and who catch them up again upon their backs when they have become weary. And you, too, you and I have a mother - and father - eagle in us, which is always there to carry us in times when we are trying out something new.

Therefore our prayer: "Come, you wind out of the East, blow through me and bring me the ideas that I am now in need of . . . "

South: The element fire belongs to the South, the sun, love, warmth, nearness, intimacy and community. The woolly mice live there. Tiny, soft, snugly animals, who also represent our gentleness, tenderness and vulnerability. When you connect with the energies of the sun, you are increasing love and trust within yourself. Therefore our prayer: "Come, you wind out of the South, blow through me and bring me the love, warmth, nearness to myself and to others that I am now in need of . . ."

West: The element water belongs to the West, the moon and the unconscious. The brown bear is at home there, who seeks

honey as his nourishment and finds it.

Therefore our prayer: "Come, you wind out of the West, blow through me and bring the life's nourishment, that I am now in need of . . . "

North: The element earth belongs to the North, the ancestors and the rules with which we are able to live together in mutual growth and support - also the discipline and the will power to live according to these rules. Here the white buffalo is at home. Therefore our prayer: "Come, you wind out of the North, blow through me and bring me the will power, the strength and the discipline to abide by the rules, which are supportive to my growth and the growth of others and allow me to achieve my goals without injuring others.

Because of its strong meditative quality, it is not always appropriate to follow this walk - at least not immediately - with a verbal exchange in the group. However, the experience lends itself to tying into themes later on in the group process (leadership, respect for nature, etc.).

Trust Circle

Many persons have not been able to develop a vital trust in themselves or in others. The goal of this exercise is to give the participants an opportunity of experiencing what the process of giving and taking feels like intensively, with their entire body The actual physical experience of trust is quite different in its quality from a mere talking about trust. Using words predominately leads us easily to an alienation from the reality of our physical being and weakens the contact with our fellow human beings. By speaking merely words we can avoid regarding our feelings or we can hide our true selves. The value of physical movement and touching lies in being able to establish important emotional contact to those persons with whom we live.

Participants

Over 10 years of age. The exercise is especially important for those who have never received enough tenderness and warmth.

Good with any group size. Larger groups can be divided into smaller ones with approximately seven persons in a group.

Time

Count on about 60 minutes.

Space

You will need a room in which the number of smaller groups can comfortably accommodate (about 90 sq. ft. pro circle).

Directions

This exercise aids you in experiencing trust physically. Can you trust one another? - And what are the accompanying feelings?-

Divide up into groups with seven persons each and see to it that men and women are distributed fairly equally . . .

Each small group is to form a circle - the smaller and/or weaker persons should also be distributed equally . . .

First of all, I would like to explain and demonstrate the exercise, so please pay careful attention, because after we start no one is to speak. In that way, no one will be distracted.

One person in each group will go into the middle of the circle and cross his or her arms over the chest. The others step in to form a close-knit circle and hold the person in the middle lightly with their hands.

The person in the middle then closes his or her eyes, holding the body upright and relaxing. The person will allow himself or herself to fall in one directions, holding the body in a straight line (the ankles provide the hinge point) and the others will catch and reach him or her gently around in the circle and place the person in an upright position again. Then the persons

in the circle enlarge the circle slightly and the person in the middle repeats the falling, being caught, reached around and placed upright once again. After a couple of times, the diameter of the circle will be reduced again. When the circle is back to original size, the round will be ended by the person being held in the upright position for a while. And then another person from the circle comes in . . . and so on until all have had a turn.

• Demonstration with one participant - just before the general start the following points should be made clear to the group:

The basic idea of this exercise is to create a situation in which the person in the middle can experience trust. He or she must be able to rely on the others that he or she will not be allowed to fall. Your task is to be worthy of this trust. Don't be rough or sudden and don't throw the person around. Be gentle and watch out when increasing the size of the circle. If there is any uncertainty, then make the circle smaller again. There is to be no talking and no laughing. Try to remain as quiet as possible during the entire exercise, so that the person in the middle can concentrate without being distracted. Place one foot in front of the other, because you can bear more weight in this position, even if you are not a particularly strong person. The closer you are to the person in the middle, the less you will have to bear.

Observe his or her feet - these should remain in the middle of the circle.

The person in the middle should relax as much as possible. The feet are solidly placed on the floor, close together. Should the person in the middle be tense, then the motions should be particularly slow and gentle. Persons with spinal difficulties should not participate.

Allow 7 - 8 minutes per participant.

Follow-Up: Sharing in the smaller groups or in plenum.

What I have learned . . .

This strategy provides the participants and the group leader(s) with feedback concerning the momentary standing of the learning process. In sharing their varying learning experiences, the individuals contribute to a consciousness of the colourful mosaic in group experience, leading to more mutual acceptance.

Directions

Prepare a large sheet of paper with the following beginnings of sentences and hang up visible for the whole group (or use flip chart):

- *What I have learned is . . .*
- *For me the following was confirmed . . .*
- *I discovered that . . .*
- *I was surprised that . . .*
- *What I liked was . . .*
- *I was disappointed that . . .*
- *The most important thing for me was . . .*

I would like to invite you to use these questions in helping all of us in gaining a perspective of the momentary thoughts and feelings in the group. Choose those beginnings of sentences from this list which appeal to you and end them with appropriate words from your own experience in the group up to this time.

It is possible to conduct this exercise verbally. However, more depth in the individual reflection is achieved if the completed sentences are written down. These can then be shared with a partner in detail and subsequently read aloud in plenum.

A variation is writing the sentences on coloured cards and putting them on the board or wall.

Chapter 22

A WORKSHOP TRAINING DESIGN

"Conducting Seminars in Training Personnel for Development Rrojects: How Can Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI) Contribute to My Skills as a Group Leader?"

30 Sept.- Oct. 1996

Time	Theme/Topic
Monday 14:30-15:00	Greeting Organizational details First thoughts: reason for longer breaks (1/2 hr. instead of 15 min.); getting off "automatic pilot"; note-taking at a minimum; reason for the circle (seeing and interacting)
15:00-16:30	**Getting started: Who am I? What motivates me to be here? What are my first impressions?** Each says name he/she wishes to be called and makes name tag - then names persons in the group they already know, stating when and where (they stand up) - then a network with yarn. - re-thinking teaching as group-leading; "It is impossible to teach someone something, but it is possible to create an environment in which learning is facilitated"; what is my manner of being in the group?
17:00-18:30	**Getting to know you: Where would I be now if I weren't here? What would I be doing? What is my preliminary goal?** Brief explanation of TCI triangle in the globe - asking without probing; sharing what I choose to say - after partner interview each introduces the partner by standing behind him/her and speaking in the "I" form - discussion: how did I feel in each role? - reflection on purpose + application of the exercise.
20:30-21:30	**What do I require to be here with you, concentrating on the theme?** Original theme (What have I heard - or experienced or read - about this method of working with groups? What arouses my interest? What do I want to know more about?) is set aside - disturbance (concern of participants concerning time schedule) is discussed.

Group Leader - Mary Anne Kuebel, Co-Leader - Dr. Niranjana A. Gokarn - 19 participants

Organized by TPDP of the Karl Kuebel Foundation and held at the Tata Institute for Social Sciences (TISS), Bombay, India

Exercise/ Technique	Up-Beat (Optional)	Structure	
	Forming a circle: one step forward	Plenum	Polite Curiosity
Weaving a Net (throwing ball of yarm to form a net)		Plenum	Openness, mosquitoes cause disruption
Partner interview, introductions		Plenum 10 min. Partners 20 Plenum 60	High interest; amazement in the experience of identification
Here and Now Round at end	Dance: Balance	Plenum 60	Weariness, inability to reach a consensus, frustration

Time	Theme/Topic
Tuesday 7:30-8:00	Meditation Body awareness - a trip through our body guided by Niranjana
9:00-10.45	"I must do what I want to do." (Chairpersonship) New scheduling is decided on; after exercise, the leading questions are: How am I leading myself? what was my experience? what patterns can I detect? Focussing on inner awareness, listening to varying voices, sorting out "musts and shoulds" and "wishes and desires" in the process of consciously and responsibly deciding - 1st postulate. Approx. 12 articles by Ruth Cohn and 5 books concerning leading groups are made available for perusal during breaks.
11:15-13:00	What is my present style of leading groups? In what direction would I like to develop? Overview of Ruth Cohn's life (Mary Anne) - considering what my personal image of myself as leader is: Niranjana leads group through different stages of perception of their "essential" character. - Feedback to the group leaders as to what my present state of being here is with a brief written statement (anonymous)
14:30-16:00	a) Reactions to Telegram (size of group, sitting on the floor, etc.) b)How can I tap into the resources of my family history? (KK-Foundation for Child & Family's purpose and goals) Guided phantasy going back to creation (4 billion years), showing interrelatedness of all living beings. Introduction of scheme to diagramm own family (genogramm) - what do I need to consider? Comparing with partner with the aid of a list of topics to consider.
16:30-18:00	Sharing with others, how can I gain new perspectives about my family, the families of others, and families at large? Exchange in the whole group, then exchange among "brothers and sisters" in smaller groups
18:30-20:00	a) Gleanings from small groups of previous session b)Women and men are human beings: how do we live together in groups? What changes am I affected by and which am I actively supporting? Focussing on my personal attitudes - watching out concerning the tendency to be talking "about" the theme
Wed. 7:30-8:00	Meditation Ghandi's birthday (National holiday) is commemorated
9:00-10.45	How can I deal constructively with disturbances and disruptions which occur in my groups? Introduction of concept of authentic selectivity and then of the 2nd postulate. Each imagines a scene, then exchange in small group. Emphasis: how can I recognize a "disturbance" (when it is without external signs)? What are my usual reactions? What might I change?

Exercise/ Technique	Up-Beat (Optional)	Structure	
concepts from yoga			relaxation
Ruth Cohn's 10 min. exercise	"How do you feel today?" - hand-out with faces depicting feelings	plenum 45 single 20 sm. groups 20 fishbowl 20	feeling accepted - then ambivalence, mixed feelings + excitement in the "new" experience
Choosing a symbol Telegram		plenum 90 single 15	interest, quiet, deep experiencing - feedback reveals high acceptance
Guided Phantasy (going back to the beginning of creation)/ Genogramm	"Fruit Basket" (participant)	plenum single 20 partner 20	curiosity about new way of looking at the family - trying to do it "correctly" - delight in new discoveries
Siblings' groups		plenum 30 3-4 groups 60	insights in generational factors
separate men's and women's groups		plenum 45 2 groups 30 plenum 15	high energy in separate groups; feeling of "relief"
music and texts			devotion
Guided Phantasy "Walkie-Talkie"	Moon Dance	plenum 45 groups of 3 25 plenum 35	a few ex-perience minimal disturbances - how aware can I allow myself to be?

Time	Theme/Topic
11:15 - 13:00	a) Continuing theme of previous session - How can I deal with difficult participants (how can I define them)? b) How are values involved in my work? (TCI axioms)? Axioms as philosophical/ethical basis of TCI is introduced. 3 volunteers among the participants state them and will lead groups in next session.
14:30 - 16:00	Continuation of axiom theme - spirited discussions in the 3 groups, reporting and discussion at large, without neglecting the relevance of my "access" to the theme
16:30 - 18:00	Putting my repetoire of topics, exercises, techniques, and structuring to good use - where is my attention needed? TCI is not a technique. Criterion for deciding on use (when, where, with whom, for what purpose, how...).
18:30 - 20:00	Having fun together as a group (and even more) - writing and producing a fairy tale - the experience of finding "consensus", fun in self-expression and creativity, indentification with the (smaller) group
Thurs. 7:30 - 8:00	Meditation Living our traditions
9:00 - 10:45	a) Gleanings from yesterday's fairy tale - What was the personal message I received? b) What questions about TCI do I now have? - working together on finding answers. The group leader is not the only "expert" - learning to pinpoint and be precise - what can be answered and what remains a question?
11:15 - 13:00	Looking at our process: which messages are important for my/our future planning? Phases in group process: arriving/getting oriented and acquainted,brewing and clarification, working phase/ productivity, ending/taking leave. The concept of "dynamic balance." Assessing our common experience so far, use of process analysis in planning, accompany process, and evaluation.
14:30 - 16:00	TPDP: Who are we? What do you want to know? - Possibilities of working together Presentation by Henry Mohanraj and discussion: Work of the Karl Kuebel Foundation, purpose of the new institutes, sharing of three participants from Bangalore seminar in Jan. as to their experiences in group leading since then.
16:30 - 18:00	Deciding on, formulating and introducing themes: how can we better "access" the task at hand? Determining a group I might be leading for TPDP (imagining it in comprehensive details) - formulating a main theme and sub-themes. Learning to be "suggestive", to provide a provisional contract, to ask leading and constructive questions.

Exercise/ Technique	Up-Beat (Optional)	Structure	
Fishbowl Mirroring With Hands (Leading + Following)	Sun Dance	Plenum 90 " 15	Intensive and constructive working atmosphere
	"Washing the Elephant" (participant)	3 Groups 45 Plenum 45	Interest in understanding in "Indian" terms
Trust Walk as an example for discussion	Dance: "The Way"	Plenum and small groups to reflect and evaluate	Disciplined working phase
A Fairy Tale		Plenum and small groups	High spirits
Singing and chants from Hindu and Moslem traditions			Quiet awareness
Changing seats between a) and b)	(group photo at 11:00)	Single plenum	Clarification, putting things together
Walking slowly (experiencing, losing and refinding balance) - Completion of wall charts for the process up till now	"7-up"	Plenum and small groups	Continued high working niveau
Fanita English's 3 cornered contract in understanding organizational relationships		Plenum	Questioning, willingness, need for more clarification
Imagination		Pplenum and groups of 3	Good working atmosphere - some dependence on guidance from leaders

Time	Theme/Topic
18:30 - 20:00	Presenting the work from the previous session. Written copies of all programme descriptions will be given or sent to Mohanraj. Two participants practice their theme "introductions", with the others taking the roles of the prescribed group. How did I experience you? How did I experience me? - Giving and receiving constructive feed-back.
21:00	"Cultural Program" a national and international talent show, produced by all
Friday 7:30 - 8:00	Meditation Celebrating the miracle of light
9:00 - 10:45	Summarizing and getting clear - what am I taking along into my globe? Reviewing process charts. Niranjana uses Ruth Cohn's "The Beyond Within" to highlight her concepts in the framework of Indian culture and traditions. TCI as a "system".
11:00 - 12:00	Looking backwards and forwards - What have I learned? What will I put to use? What do I want to do or say now in order to take my leave? Expressing the essence of my experience. Valuing the challenge of transferring my growth and learnings. Closing round with our stone.
12:00 - 12:30	Written feed-back (Summary will be sent by Mohanraj)
12:30 - 13:00	Thanks and good-bye Presents for the groups leaders, TPDP participants receive ball of yarn, crayons, and other course materials. An address list will be sent to all.

Participants received following hand-outs at the beginning of the course:

"Group Leaders," "My Self-Examination as a Group Leader," "The TCI Theme," and other short texts from Lived Psychotherapy (R. Cohn/A.Farau)

Exercise/ Technique	Up-Beat (Optional)	Structure	
	Expressing 3 of my "strengths" as group leader to a partner	Plenum	Hard work is often productive! I can take risks!
	Closing: light meditation		Fun - community - fun openness
Sanskrit bhajans + Bible texts			
	Dance: the spiral	Plenum	attentive and alert , satisfaction in being a part
A walk in nature		Groups of 3 Single Plenum	concentration on self, Preparing for the leave-taking
		Plenum	
	End: gesture meditation - "The Blossom"		Sadness and gaiety and much gratitude

"Theme-Centered-Interaction (TCI): Group Leading based on Existential Postulates" by Ruth Cohn

""Implementing TCI Group Work through Exercises and Techniques (I.Klein adapted by Mary Anne Kuebel)

20 Exercises which are effective in TCI group work.

Chapter 23

INCREASING MY EFFECTIVENESS AS EDUCATOR/GROUP LEADER

Report of a TCI Workshop, Mumbai, October 2000

Nishi Mitra

Background

It is a common observation that the educational techniques presently seen in Indian classrooms lack imagination, is teacher centric and highly coercive to the students. Individual differences are collapsed and a top down approach emphasises rote learning that leaves little room for creativity and individual interpretation. The learning that results is exam oriented and has little meaning to students as continuously evolving and maturing humans that are constantly in interaction with a dynamic environment.

As an attempt to present an alternative to such teaching techniques, a three-day introductory course on the pedagogic methods exemplified in theme centred interaction (TCI) model of working together in groups, in educational, business and therapeutic settings was planned so as to introduce some of the key themes in TCI. An introduction to the TCI method was expected to give insights to selected group of educators in India about how they

can transform teaching in classrooms to make for a more meaningful interaction that is more constructive, effective and lively. Living learning encounters that TCI facilitates provide for a learning that is based firmly on humanistic ethics.

The workshop

A workshop titled 'Increasing my Effectiveness as Educator/ Group Leader through Theme Centred Interaction (TCI)', was organised at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai from October 12-15,2000 and was specially meant for educators, social workers, and any personnel dealing with groups. This was a residential workshop with a total of 16 participants whose names and designations are appended. The workshop was made possible through funds granted by the Extra Mural Studies Department of the Institute. The funds were used to extend free board and lodging to the participants and for other organisational purposes. A small registration fee of Rs. 150 was to be paid by the participants. Participants were expected to tap their institutional or personal resources for travel and other expenses.

The workshop announcement was sent to all Social Science and Commerce Colleges in Mumbai and to all Departments of Education in the Universities in Maharashtra and in Madhya Pradesh. Additionally some research based NGO's were informed and invited through personal contact. Faculty at TISS was also invited. A total of 21 interested participants applied out of which16 were selected. All the selected participants attended the workshop.

Objectives of the Programme

To learn about the theoretical content of Theme Centred Interaction that provides ground rules for a more democratic teaching environment.

To learn about the special characteristics of the method of conducting a TCI session.

To learn group-leading skills with increased perception and communication abilities.

The Sessions

The programme was spread over a four-day period, beginning at 6.00 p.m. in the evening of October 12, 2000 and ending with lunch at 2.00 p.m. on October 15, 2000. There were a total of 14 sessions of which 11 sessions were one-and-a-half hour long, and 3 sessions an hour long. Additionally there were 2 blocks of 2 hours each in the post lunch period for individual/group assignments and a half hour of meditation on three days from 7.30 a.m. to 8.00 a.m.

October 12, 2000

Session: 6.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

Theme(s):

TCI and Living Learning: goals for this workshop.

"I am.... And I would like you to know about me!"

"Hidden in my briefcase, I brought with me..."

After welcoming the participants, the facilitators invited the group to introduce themselves through a game called 'Name Snake'. For a deeper introduction, the participants were invited to reflect and share with the group their thoughts on, "I am and I would like you to know about me!"

Thereafter the participants did a short exercise wherein they used paper cards to telegraphically write their thoughts on "Hidden in my briefcase, I brought with me...". At the end of this session the group proceeded for dinner together to the Institute Dinning Hall.

Session 2: 9.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.

Theme(s):

"I search my briefcase and decide what I want to share with you."

The participants were invited to share any of their thoughts they liked to share with the group and in this session, they expressed many of their hopes and expectations, fears and dilemmas. At the closing, we had quick round called 'Running Fire', wherein participants spoke on the theme, "my feelings and my mood at this moment". At the end of the second session, the mood was sombre and expectant. The seeds of a group were planted.

October 13, 2000

The group was to meet at 7.30 am for a half-hour of meditation together. We met only to find that our venue for meditation was *'gheraoed'* by protesting TISS students who said that they would not let any academic activity take place on the campus, till their demands were met. Sometime was spent in understanding what the students were demanding and in appealing to them to let us go on with our scheduled activities. Since the students were firm, we decided to have a short meditation in the open air, sitting on mats, right outside the room where we were to have the session. Students continued to shout their slogans in protest, yet we managed a beginning as a group. Immediately after, we proceeded for breakfast outside at a restaurant, since the students also closed the TISS Dinning Hall.

Session 3: 9.30 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.

We returned from breakfast to find the student protest had aggravated. The campus was tense. We could not disassociate from the chaotic situation because of several reasons. The most important one's being the take-over of the venue of our workshop by student protestors and the fact that four of the participants were TISS employees whose personal and professional involvement in the problem distracted them from the workshop proceedings. During this time we tried to work out alternative venue and explore possibilities of sitting together in our residential rooms, yet "Disturbance and strong involvement took precedence".

Session 4: 11.30 p.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Theme(s):

The TCI Symbol: the triangle in the sphere

"The TCI Symbol and I, my reactions..."

In the midst of much chaos, the group managed to quietly transform one of our residential rooms into a makeshift session room and Mr. Hermann Eppler, the expert facilitator presented and introduced "The TCI Symbol, the Triangle in the Sphere". Some of the confusions and distractions that we had to face came in handy in terms of explaining the elements comprising the TCI symbol. The importance of the Globe in any interaction between the elements I, We and the Theme, became predominant. The theme "TCI symbol and I, my reactions..." ,brought forward in a plenum, the insights that the group gained from an experience that could not have been replicated in a class room situation. What may have been a destructive process for the group was turned into a constructive, learning experience through the ingenious facilitation of the chief facilitator, Mr. Hermann Eppler.

2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.
Post Lunch: Period for Individual Assignment

This post lunch period was self-study time. Participants read articles on Theme Centred Interaction, provided as part of the reading material kit. Ruth Cohn's, 'Revolutionary Evolution in Classrooms: TCI" was the main article to be studied.

Session 5: 4.30 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.
Theme(s):

"After reading some TCI papers, I would like to share with you"

The morning's chaos was resolved by this time and we were back in our appointed room for the workshop. In a plenum, participants discussed important concepts and issues that threw more

light on the TCI Symbols and Operations.

Session 6: 6.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

Theme(s):

"My schedule, am I master or slave of it?"

"I would, I want, I should, I must, I do"

In this session, participants did an exercise wherein they drew individual charts showing their interests (profession, family friends, associations, reading, music, travel etc.).The important TCI concept of 'chairpersonship' was introduced with discussions in two groups facilitated by the two leaders on "I would,. I want, I should, I must, I do".

Session 7: 9.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.

Theme(s):

"I lead and I agree to be led".

A hectic day came to an end with an exercise called a 'Trust Walk'. Participants in pairs took turns to be blind folded and led by the partner. We came back to the plenum to share our experiences of leading and being led.

October 14, 2000

Session 8: 9.00 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.

Theme(s):

"How am I feeling now, are there any leftovers from yesterday?"

"Looking at these , what is important to me now".

"I am looking back on our process in the group and my part of it".

After a quick round where participants were invited to share their feelings at the beginning of the third day and any incomplete business of the previous day, we set to look back at what we had

shared with the group about things we had brought 'hidden in our briefcase'. The facilitators had worked the previous night to rearrange participants telegraphically written cards on big charts, so as to cluster together the expressions around the elements of I, We and Theme. In the current session, participants used coloured dots to select and prioritise what was important to them at this point.

It was noticeable that the previous focus on 'I' had shifted during the course of a day and half to 'We' and the 'Theme' elements of the TCI model. 'Group Leadership' and 'TCI themes', emerged to be the group's chief priorities for further discussion.

A part of session 8 therefore was devoted to the theme, "I am looking back on our process in the group and my part of it." This personal process analysis was a tool to understand leading. After a short introduction, participants reflected and wrote their thoughts on the theme. This session emerged as a very important session for the democratic non-coercive, self-directional process of TCI pedagogy became self-evident and participants reported a feeling of 'oh, I understand it now!'.

Session 9: 11.00 p.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Theme(s):

"The TCI theme as a tool, what is important in formulating them".

"The themes of our sessions, we look closely at them".

"We prepare a class and find the theme and their introduction together".

The facilitators introduced the themes, gave a short presentation and then the participants discussed the themes of our own workshop. Important insights were gained by this retrospective analysis of how one theme led to the other. The session ended by delegation of responsibility to small groups to prepare for a class and find suitable themes for presentation later to the larger group.

2.00 p.m. 4.00 p.m.

Post Lunch Period for Group Assignment

In this post lunch period, the participants worked on their group assignment. They chose topics, formulated themes and worked on their introduction. There were 3 groups of 5 persons each.

Session 10: 4.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m.

Theme(s):

"We present our themes"

" We discuss our process"

" We as students ... after class"

After presentation by the three groups, feedback came to them through the 'fish bowl' technique where participants were simultaneously observers and the observed.

Session 11: 6.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

Theme(s):

"My Experience as a group leader, when did I succeed and when did I fail..."

"The ideal group leader is and does..."

The first theme was taken up in the form of an intimate dialogue in pairs. For the second theme the group came back to the plenum and discussed together. We also used flip charts to list the qualities of an ideal leader and in this process came to question some of our routine understandings on leadership.

Session 12: 9.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.

Theme(s):

Just fun?

This session was the fun session with trust circle, many games and a positive feedback round. It did not remain only fun though for there were several important insights. Though scheduled for an

hour it went on till 2.00a.m. with much gaiety and we had to push ourselves to bed.

October 15, 2000

Session 13: 9.00 a.m. to 10.30 a.m.

Theme(s):

"Looking at my toolbox: which are new tools and how may I use them".

"Looking at our process: themes and structures we experienced".

The above themes were taken up in the form of a discussion in the plenum. Clarification was sought and questions asked. Different views on how best we could use the new tools and their limitations were expressed. This process led to a consolidation of group learning.

Session 14: 11.00 p.m. to 12.30 p.m.

Theme(s):

"I can take now a little step forward..."

"Sharing my first steps..."

"Looking back to move forward".

"Before I leave, it is important to me to say".

In this last winding up session, the first part was devoted to reflection in pairs (for most participants, discussion was with a colleague from the same organisation) on how best TCI model may be used in their own work. This was shared with the larger group in the plenum. Participants then spent some time filling an evaluation form individually. In the end, we all came close in an intimate circle and shared with the group what was important for each of us to say before we bid adieu. After a hearty lunch together we said our reluctant good byes with hopes of meeting again.

Participant Evaluation:

1. Mood at the end of the workshop

The overwhelming participant reporting was that of satisfaction, contentment, and fulfilment of purpose, enrichment and happiness. Some of the participants reported being pensive, reflective and motivated for more.

2. Topics found specially interesting/motivating/instructive

The participants gave open-ended response and their specifically mentioned topics have been tabulated below with one slash representing one reporting. Some participants gave general responses that could not be tabulated such as group building exercises were most useful or paired exercises, observing group dynamics etc.

1	Hidden in my briefcase. I search my briefcase and decide what I want to share with you	///
2	Disturbance and strong involvement take precedence	/
3	The TCI symbol	////
4	Read papers	/
5	My Chairpersonship	////
6	I lead and I agree to be led	////
7	Process analysis	///
8	The TCI theme as a tool …	///
9	We present our themes	///
10	After class…. We as students (fishbowl)	//////
11	My experience as a group leader…. The ideal group leader	////
12	Fun session	///
13	Looking at my tool box	
14	Looking back in order to move forward	/
15	Most of the topics	//

3. Topics which had less significance and why

11 out of 14 participants found none of the topics being of less significance. Several reported themes having a continuation and relation of progression. Three participants admitted that though at times themes did not make sense, looking back, 'every step had it's significance'. One participant found the theme(s), "I search my briefcase and decide what I want to share with you" and "looking at these sheets, what is important to me now", as being less important because they were "not difficult" for her to do. "My experience as a group leader", was also not so significant to her because of previous experience of it. Another participant found the theme, "I search my briefcase..." too broad and non-focussed. One participant suggested that the theme, "My schedule, am I master or slave of it..." could have been done differently.

4. What participants would apply in their daily professional life?

Amongst many things reported, the participants prioritised knowledge, method and techniques. The TCI link between I, We and Theme was realised to be very important. Participants submitted that they would attempt to change towards more democratic leadership with respect for others. Creating non-threatening environment in the classroom with space and time for awareness, reflection and change were also important agenda for application in professional life. Some participants saw a continuation between professional and personal life hence saw application of their learning beyond the professional.

5. Were there possibilities offered to influence the workshop? How did the participants use them? What did they do to help that the workshop reach its goals?

Except for one participant who did not answer the above question all participants were positive about the possibilities offered for influencing the processes of the workshop. A couple of the par-

ticipants pointed out specific occasions but most realised that they by being part of a team actively monitored and directed the proceedings of the workshop through their interaction.

6. How do you judge the leaders and the workshop regarding the following aspects; professional competence, social competence, communication skills, ability to handle conflicts, methodical design of the workshop.

Participants were very happy with the leadership. Their remarks are being reproduced in toto.

- Excellent. Both Hermann and Nishi could compliment each other in making the participants feel completely ease. With remarkable patience and sense of purpose and clear communication they could successfully give information. The workshop was very well planned and executed.

- The workshop was organised and conducted with professional and social competence. Communication by the facilitators and group leaders was no problem. In spite of certain unforeseen disturbances, the entire workshop was managed very well.

- Professional Competence: Absolutely thorough and it came from within. Both actually modelled the role of the group leader in the sessions. A successful workshop would not be possible if the leaders did not believe completely in the theme and actually lived it. This success was because of the competence; the commitment and the sensitivity of the leaders Hermann and Nishi. The principles of TCI were followed even during the crisis, which was remarkable.

- Aspects
  a) Professional Competence
  b) Ability to handle conflicts
  c) Methodical design

Reason

Depth of knowledge

Practical experience, classroom and outside

While taking session leader has designed suitable design

• The leaders who were facilitating the workshop were competent enough and had thorough knowledge of the subject and did not find communication (as far as language is concerned) a problem. They have done it well.

• Leaders were absolutely clear about goals. They were very good at handling conflicts, communicating their feelings. They made the group feel one. We hardly felt the imposition of personality by leaders and yet they were leading most efficiently. I like the commitment and faith they have.

• a) professional competence – very good – leader of TCI knew it as back of his hand and modelled principles effectively

b) Social Competence – good, in taking cues from the group.

c) Communication – effective and well supported by partnering leader.

d) Conflicts – handled well, based on basic axioms and principles in built in the method. Not many were explicit.

e) Methodical design – very effective as it is evolved based on group processes.

• All these aspects were well handled. As I am a feeling person, what I observed was that feelings were dealt with covertly and for a long time I did not realise they were dealt with, till this realisation dawned. So there was a sense of incompleteness for a long time. It got addressed very subtly and beautifully. I have now discovered a way of being implicitly explicit.

• The leaders were both professionally and socially very competent, extremely capable of handling conflicts. Their faithfulness

to the philosophy of TCI was impressive – they directed their methodology based on this philosophy – which became apparent later.

TCI is a concept advocating 'living learning' and the method adopted was apt to its basic purpose. It cannot be taught as a theory lesson. The method adopted evolved the entire concept beautifully in an experiential manner. This truly reflects the professional competence of the leader who has assimilated a concept.

- Leaders –

a) Thorough gentlemen/women.

b) Professionally integrated

c) Socially conscious

d) Communication – shaped by TCI method

e) Ability to handle conflicts – we had differences in M & T

f) Design of workshop - excellent

- Hermann – He could become a model for the entire group as a result of his total internalisation of TCI approach and rigorous practice of its methods. On one occasion rigid. Open and cautious to adapt to Indian situation

Nisha – More occupied with her role as an organiser; conscientious, caring, insightful. May benefit from some more seminars of TCI to explore her own personality. Her total commitment to TCI would be an asset on this journey.

- The trust factor was very high and it was reinforced repeatedly when needs were addressed and met - space for individual concerns and the support of the group facilitated by the leaders left no doubt about their skills and competence. Never felt "being taught", it was facilitation of experiencing to "be".

- Both the workshop leaders that we have worked with are professionally competent people. They succeeded in making this workshop so effective and result oriented in just 3 days time due

to their frank and amiable disposition, perfect communication with the group, adept handling of both minor and major disturbances, specially the day students were on protest.

7. How do you judge the workshop with regard to organisation, locality, and length?

The participants generously used epithets like excellent, perfect, well organised. The locality (i.e. TISS Campus) was appreciated. Time management was also praised. Most participants found the length or duration of workshop, optimal, a couple of them wished it was longer. One said, "It was like a dress that was long enough to cover the essentials and short enough to arouse further curiosity."

8. What do you think about the material you got before and during the workshop?

The participants found the materials provided very useful. All of them appreciated the material that was sent to them in advance by post. Many felt that the material given during the workshop should have been given in advance so as to enable them to read it. Some admitted that there was some purpose in withholding the material, as the gradual unfolding of the workshop itself was exciting. Requests for more TCI articles were made especially complete works of Ruth Cohn.

9. Proposals for future TCI workshops

Participants proposed

- Structured follow-ups by way of newsletters and e-mail.
- A workshop attending to concerns of working women
- Workshop at least once in 6 months
- One day as well as 2-3 days workshops especially during vacations
- Workshops especially for faculty in Tata Institute of Social

Sciences. Students and Faculty involved in Basic course on Group work may benefit particularly.

- More sharing, reflections so as to develop the TCI concept in the Indian context.
- A TCI website.
- More exchange of materials.

The overall evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive. We hope that this process of impacting teaching fraternity in India so as to transform the unfriendly, unimaginative and coercive teaching in India classrooms, will continue and bear fruit. We thank the Dept. of Extra Mural Studies of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, for extending funds for initiating such a process in this part of the country.

Course Facilitators

External: Mr.Herman Eppler
Internal: Ms Nishi Mitra

Mr.Eppler, born in 1941 in Switzerland is an Architect by profession. Heading up his own office (Eppler Maraini Schoop, Architects), he is also a Lecturer for Design, Construction and Computer Aided Architectural Design at the Zurich University of Applied Sciences. TCI diploma in 1996. He has taken initiatives to look into concerns of internationality, in adapting TCI in other regions of the globe.

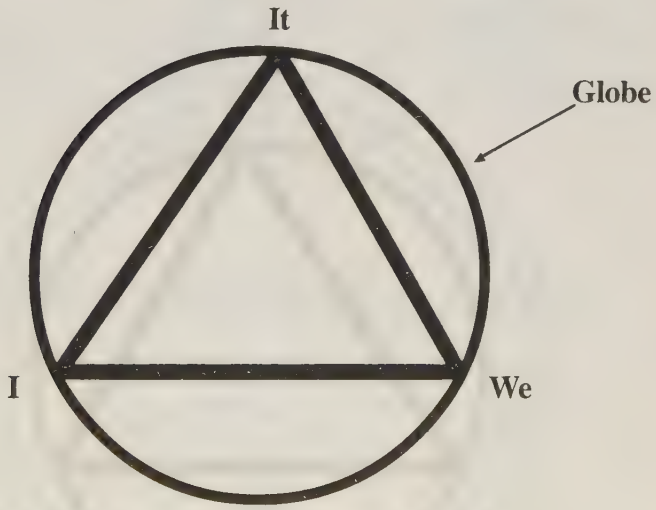
Ms Nishi Mitra is a Senior Lecturer in the Unit for Women's studies. A trained social-cultural anthropologist, Ms Mitra is teaching courses on tribal anthropology and gender issues to postgraduate students at the institute. She is primarily engaged in research on women and development themes. The WILL. As member of this Committee, Mr Eppler's participatory nature of TCI based learning has interested Ms Mitra and she is adapting some of these techniques in her own teaching and training.

Part V

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

Chapter 24

THEME CENTERED INTERACTION (TCI)



The 4 - Factors Model of the triangle in the circle contains the fundaments of humanistic ethics. From an ethical position the four factors of the TCI symbol mean:

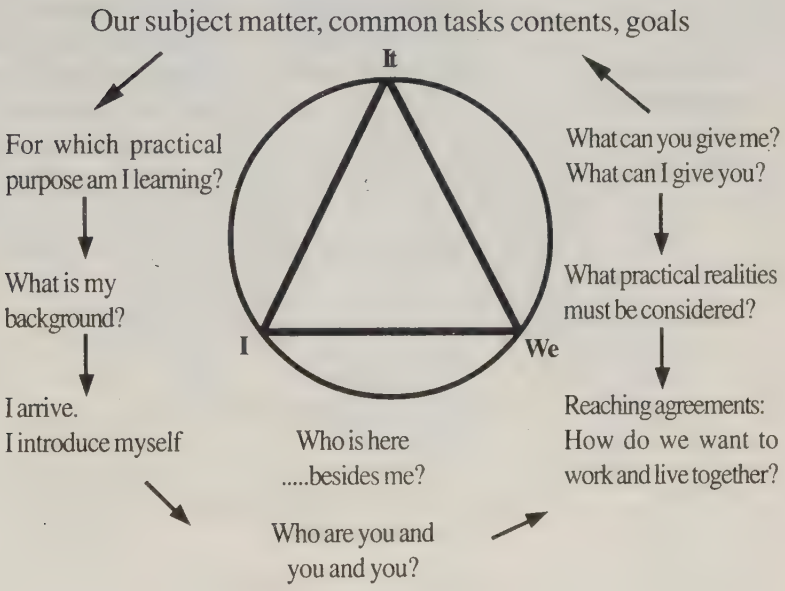
- that we perceive and respect ourselves as a person; that as a part of our responsibility for ourselves and for others we can become more aware of our own wishes, abilities and possi-

bilities along with their brighter and darker aspects - in order to decide and act more personally and with more integrity (factor: I);

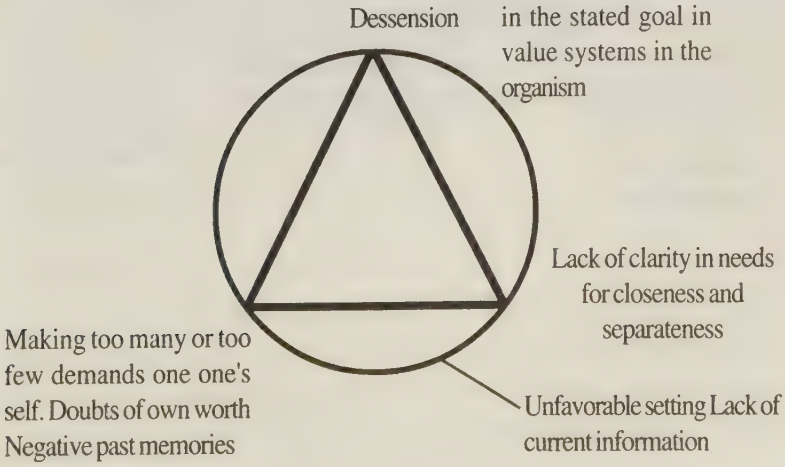
- that we respect this same importance in self-leadership in every other person and try to behave appropriately (factor: We);
- that we see the community experience in a group as the attention to out common relevant task (factor: It);
- that our ability to be conscious and responsible is capable of expansion and can be applied, beyond a particular interactional group, on the levels of our local community, the nation, mankind, all life on this planet - transpersonal and transcendental (factor: Globe)

The Globe is a series of concentric circle from nearby to far away.

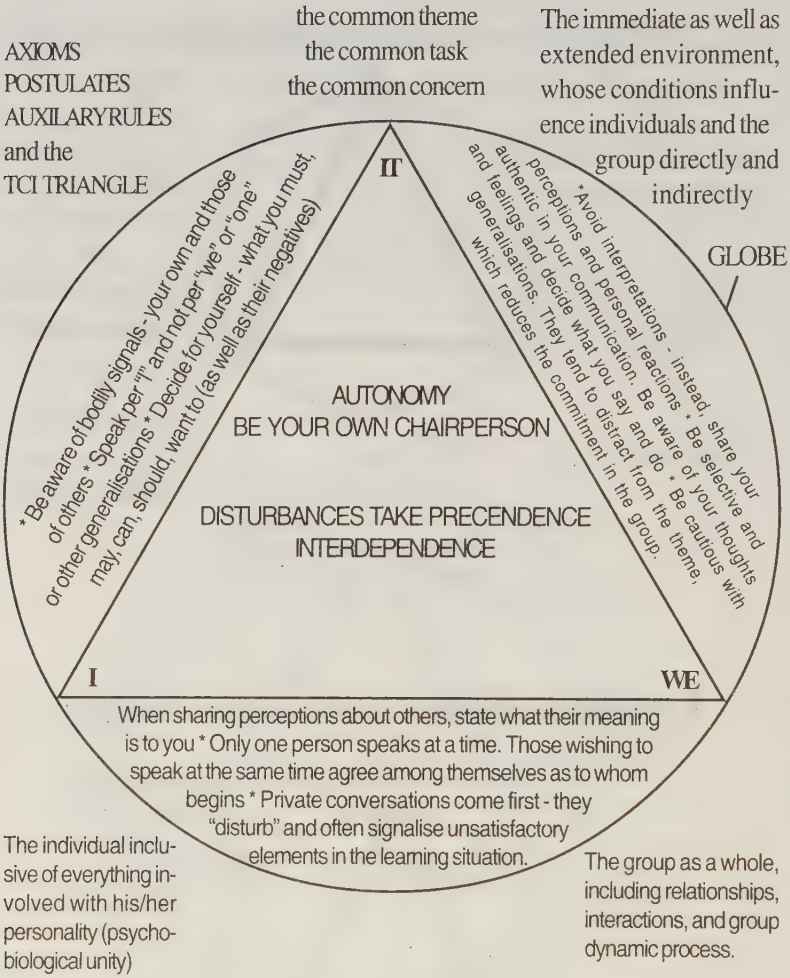
Theme Building in the TCI Triangle


Our subject matter, common tasks contents, goals
It
For which practical purpose am I learning?
What can you give me? What can I give you?
What is my background?
What practical realities must be considered?
I
We
I arrive. I introduce myself
Who is here .....besides me?
Reaching agreements: How do we want to work and live together?
Who are you and you and you?

Possible Sources of Disturbances


Dessension
in the stated goal in value systems in the organism
Lack of clarity in needs for closeness and separateness
Making too many or too few demands one one's self. Doubts of own worth Negative past memories
Unfavorable setting Lack of current information

Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI)


AXIOMS
POSTULATES
AUXILARY RULES
and the
TCI TRIANGLE
the common theme
the common task
the common concern
The immediate as well as extended environment, whose conditions influence individuals and the group directly and indirectly
GLOBE
IT
I
WE
*Be aware of bodily signals - your own and those of others * Speak per "I" and not per "we" or "one" or other generalisations * Decide for yourself - what you must, may, can, should, want to (as well as their negatives)
*Avoid interpretations - instead, share your perceptions and personal reactions * Be selective and authentic in your communication. Be aware of your thoughts and feelings and decide what you say and do * Be cautious with generalisations. They tend to distract from the theme, which reduces the commitment in the group.
AUTONOMY
BE YOUR OWN CHAIRPERSON
DISTURBANCES TAKE PRECENDENCE
INTERDEPENDENCE
When sharing perceptions about others, state what their meaning is to you * Only one person speaks at a time. Those wishing to speak at the same time agree among themselves as to whom begins * Private conversations come first - they "disturb" and often signalise unsatisfactory elements in the learning situation.
The individual inclusive of everything involved with his/her personality (psychobiological unity)
The group as a whole, including relationships, interactions, and group dynamic process.

Chapter 25

GLOSSARY
FOR TCI AND RELATED EXPERIENTIAL METHODS

Compiled by
Mary Anne Kuebel and Klaus Volker-Schuetz

This glossary is intended as a reference source for those interested in deepening their knowledge of Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI). Essentially, it offers explanations for certain terms and concepts. An introduction to TCI, as a prerequisite or accompanying text to this list, can be found in the following articles: Dr. Ruth C. Cohn, "Peepholes - About the Life History of TCI and Ruth C. Cohn," (1994) and Dr C. Thomas Abraham and Mary Anne Kuebel, "Group Leading as Attitude and Skill: Theme-Centered Interaction," (1999).

I. Concepts and Terms Specific to TCI (listed alphabetically)

Auxiliary Rules

In Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI), auxiliary rules have the function as aids in communication and as techniques of intervention in order to promote a more personal contact with the meanings of the axioms and postulates. They are to be used as "helping" rules

only to the extent that they really "help" - that is, the decision to use them (making them visible) in the group process varies according to the situation. Accordingly, a list of such rules will also vary. Ruth Cohn considers these 5 rules are usually "helpful":

- "Be cautious with generalisations." They have the tendency to interrupt the group process.
- "If you ask a question, say why you ask it and what that question means to you. Speak for yourself and avoid interviewing."
- "Hold back with your interpretations of others as long as possible. State preferably your own personal reactions."
- "Be aware of your body's signals and be aware of those of others. "
- "If you make comments about the conduct or the character of another participant or of a person not present, state additionally what it means to you, that he or she is the way he or she is (that is, as you see it)."

Axioms

Three axioms (established fundamental assumptions which do not have to be proved) are basic for Theme-Centered Interaction .

1.*The human being is a psycho-biological unity and a part of the universe.* For that reason he is autonomous and interdependent at the same time. An individual's autonomy becomes greater, the more our consciousness of everyone's interdependence with everything is expanded (anthropological axiom).

2. *Reverence is due to everything living and to its growth.* Respect for growth necessitates value judgements in decisions. The humane is valuable; the inhumane is threatening to values (ethical axiom).

3. *Free will occurs within conditional internal and outer boundaries; expansion of these boundaries is possible* (pragmatic-political axiom). (Ruth C. Cohn)

Crises in Groups: Prevention and Interventions

Dealing with difficult participants and situations in the process of the group work. The emphasis in TCI lies, in contrast with other methods, in the establishment of a spirit in the group (a "group culture"), which aids in preventing crises.

Disturbances

Within the TCI context, disturbances (and strong emotional involvements) are the result of a shifting of awareness when an individual or several participants experience, consciously or unconsciously, an inner distancing from the theme at hand. "Antipathies and distress can petrify the individual and undermine the group; unexpressed and suppressed they determine events in school classes, among board members, in governments . . . The postulate that disturbances and strong emotional involvement have precedence merely means that we recognise the reality of human life." (Ruth C. Cohn). TCI is aware of the opportunity that each disturbance contributes towards more liveliness in our common activities. Working through complex disturbances of a continual nature as well as deeper reaching conflicts with a personality are more appropriate in a therapeutic context.

Dynamic Balance

The TCI system works on the equilibrium hypothesis. It states that the individual (the "I"), the interaction in the group (the "We"), the theme as the group's task (the "It") and the environment in the narrowest and widest sense (the "Globe") are essentially equal in value. It is possible for the group to be learning together in a lively fashion, as long as the dynamic balance among these four factors is established again and again. However, there is never a statistical equilibrium in group work - balance is possible only as a *dynamic* process.

Interdependence

"Interdependence" means mutual dependence, connectedness, and a sense of everything belonging together. In the TCI concept

of the human situation, it is the opposite pole to autonomy, to the independence of the individual person. Ruth C. Cohn emphasises the equal positions between autonomy and interdependence in human existence.

Leading

Within the concepts of TCI, leading includes leading oneself as well as leading a group. Leading is chairpersonship put into practice (cf. Postulates). According to TCI, group leaders are model participants who involve themselves in the group process by being selective-authentic. In addition, the group leaders assume the responsibility, as far as appropriate and necessary, that the group remains in contact with the task that they have defined and the goals that they have set (the leader as "caretaker" or "advocate" of the theme). They give attention to the balancing between individual and common needs as well as those involving the environment. They give consideration to the auxiliary rules and generally assume the tasks of establishing, formulating and introducing themes.

Living Learning

Living learning is the main goal of TCI. In this term the intended process of learning, the subjective learning experience of the individual, as well as the shared desired goal in learning are expressed as equal components. Living learning emphasises:

- careful perception of oneself and others in both private and professional areas;
- the strengthening of independence and autonomy in contact with others;
- imparting knowledge in a lively way that is suitable for those taking part;
- combining the needs of work, with care for the individual and interpersonal relationships in both profit and non-profit groups;

- leading work discussions, conferences, congresses etc. in a spirit of lively communication, and using rivalry to further cooperation.

Method/Attitude

"In the context of TCI, method and attitude are bonded together as inseparably as are form and content in a work of art or body and soul in the individual." (Ruth C. Cohn)

Pedagogy/Education vs. Therapy

In contrast to group psychotherapy, a TCI workshop does not attempt to work through the individual problems, desires and causes of the participants in regard to their origins and connections within the personal life history. Usually attention to such content during a workshop is given only to the extent that blockages need to be removed, so that a renewed concentration on the theme is possible.

Postulates

Two postulates (dictates) are derived from the TCI axioms:

First postulate: *Be your own chairperson.*

That means:

Be aware of yourself and your internal realities and your environment.

Take each situation as an opportunity for your decisions. Give and take according to how you wish to be responsible for yourself and others.

Second postulate: *Disturbances and strong involvements have precedence.*

Be aware of obstacles along your way, your own and those of others. If they are not dealt with, growth will be more difficult, if not impossible.

Selective Authenticity

"I have countered the credo of absolute frankness, which is so

widespread presently, with the idea of selective authenticity. Everything, which is said, should be genuine; not everything, which is genuine, should be said. Tact and timing are integral parts of each intervention, and thus an anticipation of possible reactions from others." (Ruth C. Cohn)

Structure/Process/Trust

The terms "structure," "process," and "trust" represent three important supporting elements in TCI group work. All three factors are functioning in every group, since the process in the group is always related to the feeling of trust among the participants and to the structuring of the task at hand. Ideally, the factors "structure," "process," and "trust" are in equilibrium in a TCI group.

"Establishing TCI structures means: preplanning with respect to all known factors and probabilities in the here-and-now of the process, remaining flexible in regard to necessary changes. Rigid planning is just as useless and no planning at all." (Ruth C. Cohn)

Structuring

All the elements pertaining to time, space and group constituency (plenum, smaller groups, etc.) belong to the structuring of the group process. The group leader decides or guides the decision-making in regard to these elements. The most important criterion is the extent to which a particular structure (for instance, sharing with a partner for 5 minutes within the group room) is contributing to resolving the task set by the theme.

TCI Triangle within the Sphere

The emblem of the TCI triangle within the sphere shows the four essential factors present in every group process. "All four are connected with one another and are equal in worth. These factors are:

- the individual whose attention is directed towards herself/himself, towards the others in the group and to the theme (= I);
- the participants in the group, who become a group through

their attention to the theme and the interaction in the group (= WE);

- the theme, the task with which the group is concerned (= IT);
- the environment which influences the group and is influenced through the group, i.e., the environment in its immediate and farther consequences (= GLOBE)." (Ruth C. Cohn)

The Theme:

Determining - Developing a feeling for and determining themes that are appropriate for the participants and the situation according to the process within the group work itself. The TCI group leader is striving to discover the key issue within the general theme that is to receive attention next - and that in a way that every participant is optimally involved in "living learning."

Formulating - The precise verbal form of each determined theme, which contains as many aspects of reality in a given situation as possible. Formulations should be engaging, specific and easily understandable, take the general interests of the participants into consideration, make constructive thinking possible and support the personal commitment of the individual.

Introducing - Guiding a group through the acquaintance with a new content, a specific presentation of a new task and/or a question which is the next to be attended to.

TCI-Themes - "Within the TCI context, the theme is the formulated concern. It is the concentrated, usually verbal expressed focus of attention." (Ruth C. Cohn)

II. Concepts and terms applying to TCI as well as to other group methodology and related areas of "humanistic psychology." (Listed alphabetically)

Behaviourism/Behavioural Psychology

"Behaviourism" or "behavioural psychology" refers to the school

of thought within psychology as a whole that attempts to understand an individual by means of observing his or her behaviour. Experimental psychology, which claims to be a scientific-experiential discipline, provides fundamental information for behaviourism. Behaviourism sees psychology as an objective, non-introspective science, which is concerned only secondarily with subjective experience and the processes of consciousness. Behaviour research, theories of learning and behavioural therapy are the best known expressions of this school of thought. Behavioural therapists share the assumption that most behaviour is learned, that means acquired through experience and therefore could be un-learned again, making behavioural change possible.

Bioenergetics

As formulated by Alexander Lowen in the 1950s and 1960s, Bioenergetics strives to integrate biological/bodily realities into the areas of psychotherapy and education. The body and its functions, including illness and health, is thus seen in its relationship to mind, spirit and soul. This holistic view expresses the interdependence of all factors.

Community Building

Dr. M. Scott Peck formulated this model of being together in a group with the focus on experiencing a deeper connectedness between the participants. Based on the concept that all those participating are equal in leading the group, the typical group process is one that develops through the following phases: pseudo-community, chaos, emptiness, and community. The idea of "speaking when moved to speak" has similarities to TCI's chairpersonship postulate.

Counter-transference

A psychoanalytic term referring to the unconscious reaction of a therapist to the transference fantasies and wishes of the client during the therapeutic process (cf. "**Transference**"). Counter-

transferences find their origins in the personal life history of an individual and are related to particular fixations in perception and fantasies from early childhood.

In using this psychoanalytic concept in a methodical way to reflect what is going on in a group, it is important

- to be aware that a transference is occurring,
- to reduce counter-transferences, which distort relationships, through experiential learning and/or one's own therapy,
- to use the counter-transference reactions of group leaders as an aid in sounding out exactly how an unconscious dynamic is functioning in a particular situation.

During the mid-1950s in the U.S.A., Ruth C. Cohn led a number of experimental counter-transference workshops for practising psychoanalysts. These workshops were the spawning grounds for the development of Theme-Centered Interaction.

Critical Consciousness Pedagogy (Paulo Freire)

This is a level of consciousness characterised by depth in the interpretation of problems, through testing one's own findings with openness to revision, attempting to avoid distortion when perceiving problems and preconceived notions when analysing them, receptivity to the new without rejecting the old because it is old. In striving toward critical consciousness, the individual rejects passivity, practising dialogue rather than polemics, and using permeable, interrogative, restless, and dialogical forms of life. Critical consciousness is brought about not through an individual or intellectual effort, but through collective struggle and praxis. This principle of Paulo Freire was developed during the campaign against illiteracy in Latin America.

Experiential Therapy/Education

Towards the end of the fifties and the beginning of the sixties, a number of new approaches in psychotherapy, deviating from a

classic psychoanalytic method, appeared, which are collectively referred to as "experiential therapies" today. The issue at that time was less in establishing a fully defined new concept of psychotherapy than in shifting some of the priorities in working therapeutically with individuals and groups. Ruth C. Cohn wrote: "Similarly to our psychoanalytic colleagues, the experiential therapist is involved in establishing an atmosphere within which open communication and interaction are supported. However, he or she will be primarily interested in direct expressions through behaviour and feelings and only secondarily in psychodynamic relationships and interpretations. The concern is more for the *how* in the relationships of the patient within his or her family, at work and in the on-going group, rather than for the *why*. The most important concepts are authenticity and directness, not transference and resistance."

Names of persons involved in this development, aside from Ruth Cohn, are George Bach, Albert Ellis, Fritz Perls, Elisabeth Minty, Henry Guze, Alexander Lowen and Vin Rosenthal. Most of these therapists later further developed their own concepts, based on the common ground of experiential therapy.

Existential Philosophy/Existentialism

Representatives within the humanistic psychology mention these philosophical schools again and again in the basic thinking of their methods. Existential philosophy and humanistic psychology share the following concepts:

The human being is valid as

- the subject of experiencing,
- responsible to the same extent for both herself/himself as well as for others,
- a creature which can exercise freedom of choice and decision.

The tradition of existential philosophy in the teachings of the philosopher Sören Kierkegaard has been particularly assimilated.

Feedback

A methodical principle formulated by Kurt Lewin for all forms of working with groups oriented on group dynamics. A statement by an individual, informing another individual, how his/her behaviour is being perceived, understood and experienced by that person.

Fishbowl/Aquarium

A special way of structuring within TCI group work, effective for plenary sessions, particularly those with a large group of participants: A smaller group, possibly four to eight participants, sit together in the middle of the larger group, thus forming a group in the "fishbowl." They interact with one another, and the larger group, forming a circle on their perimeter, are the observers/listeners. It is also possible to increase the liveliness of exchange between the two groups, if one or two spots in the inner circle are reserved for temporary "visits" of participants from the outer circle, usually in order to relay something of immediate importance, often something with emotional content. Such contributions should be brief, so that the place again becomes vacant for someone else from the outer circle. It is the task of the group leader to see to it that this structure is being adhered to.

Flashbulb

A typical TCI technique for intervention, which is applied frequently in phases of disorientation in the group process. The group leader encourages the participants, to express successively and compactly (just as the flashbulb catches a moment in time) their present state (I-oriented flashbulb), their momentary feelings for the others (WE-oriented flashbulb), their contact to the theme (IT-oriented-flashbulb) or their contact with nearer and farther lying areas (GLOBE-oriented flashbulb). In phases, in which the interaction has bogged down, orientation and transparency in the group process becomes thus possible once more.

Gestalt Pedagogy

This term refers to certain approaches in the field of education that developed from trends within the humanistic psychology, existentialism and experimentalism. Central concepts are derived from Gestalt therapy (Fritz Perls) and the ideas of Paul Goodman.

Gestalt Psychology

A school of psychological thought founded at the beginning of the 20th century by Max Wertheimer, Kurt Koffka and Wolfgang Köhler, which emphasises the totality/wholeness of human experience. A central tenant of gestalt psychology is that the human being is organised in complex relationships and that all parts of psychic life are to be understood only in their relationship *to* and their functions *within* its totality. These gestalt-psychological concepts found their access to current practices of group dynamics through the work of Kurt Lewin. Likewise, gestalt-psychological ways of viewing things influenced the practice of psychotherapy, especially through gestalt therapy.

Gestalt Therapy/Counselling

Gestalt therapy is a phenomenological-existential therapy founded by Frederick (Fritz) and Laura Perls in the 1940s. It teaches therapists and patients the phenomenological method of awareness, in which perceiving, feeling, and acting are distinguished from interpreting and reshuffling pre-existing attitudes. Explanations and interpretations are considered less reliable than what is directly perceived and felt. Patients and therapists in Gestalt therapy dialogue, that is, communicate their phenomenological perspectives. Differences in perspectives become the focus of experimentation and continued dialogue. The goal is for clients to become aware of what they are doing, how they are doing it, and how they can change themselves, and at the same time, to learn to accept and value themselves. Gestalt therapy focuses more on process (what is happening) than content (what is being discussed). The emphasis is on what is being done,

thought and felt at the moment rather than on what was, might be, could be, or should be. These concepts have found resonance in other areas, especially in education.

Group Dynamics

The analysis and study of groups and their processes in general. Kurt Lewin is recognised as both the founder of the scientific field of group dynamics and the inventor of the workshop and the skill-building seminar. Lewin felt that social problems, including conflict, leadership, and adjustment, should be solved scientifically for there "is no hope of creating a better world without a deeper scientific insight into the function of leadership and culture."

Group Process

The behaviours and feelings of group participants, as well as their reflections (thoughts) about them, during the course of group work. This process can be analysed in order to heighten learning effects and to enable participants to attain a meta level, i.e., as if they were viewing their own proceedings from an outside perspective.

Here and Now

A concept which originated in Gestalt Therapy and applied universally in experiential work. It stresses the importance of what is being perceived at the present moment and provides techniques to highlight this in group work. Ruth Cohn: "The Here and Now point of intersection between past and future is the only moment in life in which I can act. We need considerable concentration and practice to take off our conventional anti-perception glasses. The apparently simple questions: 'What are you feeling now?' and 'What do you see at the moment?' demand a concentration of our senses that we had learned to screen out."

Humanistic Psychology and Pedagogy

Refers to a number of psychological (later also pedagogical)

approaches and psychotherapeutical methods which emerged in the U.S.A. during the early 1960s and which were considered a "Third Power," - that is, as a supplement, alternative and counter-movement to psychoanalysis and behavioural therapy. Main representatives included: Charlotte Bühler, Ruth C. Cohn, Abraham Maslow, Fritz Perls, Carl Rogers and others.

Maslow considered humanistic psychology a temporary phenomenon, in preparation for a transpersonal psychology ("Fourth Power"), that transcends the personal and extends beyond humaneness, identity and self-realisation. Cf. Transpersonal Psychology.

Interactional Games and Exercises

Guided experiences, structured learning situations aimed at improving perception, communication and cooperation skills, originally developed in connection with the early laboratories for group dynamics. Important within the context of TCI: "Exercises and games are appropriate in TCI group work, if they are functional within the set theme and if they are applied in adaptation to the group situation" (Paul Matzdorf).

Intervention

Verbal and non-verbal expressions of the group leaders in order to involve a participant in examining the ulterior and/or deeper meanings of his or her behaviour, as well as any behaviour on the part of the group leader to direct or re-direct the attention of a participant or the group as a whole to certain aspects of the group process. Since interventions stop the natural flow of interactions, they should be well considered by the responsible group leader.

Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

NLP was developed out of insights gained within Gestalt and Family Therapy, as well as the hypnotic trance work of Milton Erickson. It is concerned with discovering the "language of the brain," based on knowledge as result of experiencing through our

five senses. The structure of this subjective reality is analysed and strategies developed to aid the individual or groups to achieve the goals that are set by them. Our perceptions are portrayed as a "map of reality," which often needs correction and never is completely the same as reality itself. Areas of application include education, management, therapy and counselling.

Open Space Technology (OST)

OST is a system of convening larger groups and engaging them on focussed topics. The introductory and final sessions are in plenum. Between lies an intricately structured process where individuals share and develop their ideas in self-convened meetings and wherein the participants are free to move about. Basic principles: Whoever comes are the right people; whatever happens is the only thing that could have happened; whenever it starts is the right time; when it's over, it's over. Participants continually move between community and the marketplace of issues and topics.

Person-Centered Learning and Teaching (Carl Rogers)

Carl R. Rogers (1902-1987), one of the early representatives of humanistic psychology, applied the knowledge and practice from the area of client-centred therapy, which he developed, to school and other learning situations. His method of person-centred learning and teaching, which sets the primary goal for the learning person in developing his/her personality to the greatest extent and not in attaining an externally set standard of proficiencies, demands that the teacher relinquish the role of "the one who teaches" and thinks of herself/himself rather as "a facilitator in learning."

Phases in Group Work

Just as every individual experiences his own development or has his or her own history, groups, too, develop their own "life history." Even though every group is unique, there are certain regular patterns that can be recognised in any group's development. Knowing about these development phases is helpful when planning, accompanying

as well as evaluating a group process, as long as these regular patterns are not misunderstood to be a fixed timetable. Four important phases in group work are: 1) Arriving - Breaking the Ice - Getting one's Bearings, 2) Maturing and Clarifying, 3) Work Satisfaction and Productivity and 4) Withdrawal and Transfer.

Process Analysis

It consists of observations, descriptions and evaluations in order to reflect the different phases and aspects of group work. A process analysis can be prepared either by the group leader or with the help of some or all of the participants.

Projection

One of the unconscious defensive mechanisms described in psychoanalysis. The process of dealing and reducing anxiety in which an individual attributes his or her own feelings and characteristics to someone else. One's own impulses are not perceived as such, rather as if they were occurring externally, sometimes even as an impulse belonging to the other person. An example: someone has difficulty being together with another person and states his/her own feelings of antagonism as belonging to the other person ("You always are aggressive to me!")

Psychoanalysis

A school of psychology and form of psychotherapy founded by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) in Vienna, which attempts to understand current psychic phenomena as based on unconscious patterns which develop during an individual's life history. That which is unconscious is not directly observable. Therefore the techniques in psychoanalysis, including free association, interpretation of dreams and supposed "mistakes," and the examination of the transference in the relationship between therapist and client, are aimed at bringing this unconscious material to an appropriate level of consciousness. Carl Gustav Jung, Alfred Adler, Wilhelm Reich and Harald Schultz-Hencke, among others, developed the

ideas of Freud further, as well as expanding them and making important additions for the therapeutic practice.

Resistance

Resistance is the term for a psychic phenomenon that Sigmund Freud experienced in his psychoanalytic treatment. Freud discovered that quite a bit of the behaviour and verbal expressions of his patients were directed at preventing access to their own unconscious, thus in an effort to allude the therapist. Freud characterises resistance as a barrier that the analysand sets, which functions as a hindrance to an understanding of the symptoms and the progress of the treatment. This term has been accepted in many forms of psychotherapy and group work, sometimes with adaptations.

Rounds

Structures within which the interaction is stopped and the participants are given the opportunity to react briefly to a question. The expression "round" is an indication that the group is often sitting in a circle and that each person will have a turn. The simple round follows one after the other around the circle (sometimes passing an object, such as a stone). Other rules are possible, such as used in the exercises "Flashbulb" and "Weaving a Net."

"Rounds are an aid in guaranteeing that each individual in the group has a chance to express himself or herself." (Ruth C. Cohn)

Systemic Theory

Emphasises the importance of a system being more than just the sum of its parts. Groups and social organisations are determined by a self-regulation of their entirety, made up of mutually interdependently operating members. Feedback and circularity are valued, in contrast to deterministic cause/result thinking. Systemic theory has had a great impact on family and group therapy and organisational development, emphasising communication skills, self-esteem and the ability to make responsible decisions. Processes are seen as an orientation to achieve self-set goals, not as problem solving.

Transactional Analysis (TA)

Based on the concepts of Dr. Eric Berne, who postulated three ego-states in the personality of the individual - the parent ego-state, the adult ego-state, and the child ego-state. Further, that communication consists of transactions originating from these ego-states. TA has been influential as an aid in understanding human development and human relationships, placing an emphasis on implementing the responsible power of the adult state, which in turn has a clear and realistic contact with the parent and child states. The basic TA concepts have been integrated in the mainstream of psychotherapy, educational and organisational areas over the past 30 years.

Transpersonal Psychology

Transpersonal Psychology has emerged as the extension of psychological studies into consciousness, spiritual growth, body-mind relationships, and personal transformation. It is the study of the whole human being - the interconnectedness of spirit, mind and body and is based on the premise that relationships, awareness, and spiritual values and practices are the major components through which individuals achieve self-actualisation. C. G. Jung, William James, Abraham Maslow, Stanislav Grof and Ken Wilbur represent this tradition.

Transfer

Transfer refers to the process of relating the learning experiences during a course or workshop to the work and/or home situation. This requires special theme-setting during and especially towards the closing of a course, thereby giving participants the opportunity to deal with the issues involved in applying what they have learned in a preventive fashion. In particular, thought should be given to what might make it difficult to apply new forms of behaviour or knowledge, thus replacing illusions with more realistic assessments and strategies.

Transference

The psychoanalytic term for the expression of wishes and feelings which originally were connected with important persons in the individual's past (primarily parents) and which are re-lived in the relationships to individuals in the present (i.e., group leaders, therapists). In psychoanalysis, transference is considered an important aid in overcoming repressed conflicts. However, within the TCI context the emphasis lies in examining and correcting these distortions in perception (transference) on the basis of its realistic content. Resolving these difficulties, which lie in the life history of the individual, is reserved for psychotherapeutic methods (cf. Counter-Transference).

Chapter 26

DR. RUTH C. COHN

Biographical Data

Parents: Arthur Hirschfeld, businessman in banking in Berlin-Charlottenburg, born 1873 in Berlin, and Elisabeth Hirschfeld, née Heiden-Heimer, pianist, born 1883 in Mainz. Both from established German-Jewish business families. Marriage 1908, residence in Berlin-Charlottenburg.

1909 Birth of brother, Karl Ernst Cohn.

1912 Birth of Ruth Charlotte Cohn.

1918-1931 Attended elementary and high school (emphasis on modern foreign languages), Abitur (Matura). No anti-semitic experiences.

1/4/1930 Death of father.

1931-32 Studied economics and psychology at the University of Heidelberg and Berlin.

3/31/1933 Flight to Zurich, Switzerland. Admitted to the University of Zurich.

During the following years: studied with a major in psychology, minors in pre-clinical medicine and psychiatrics; additional studies in education, theology,

literature, philosophy. Training as psychoanalyst at the International Association for Psychoanalysis; traininganalyst: Hans Behn-Eschenburg and Medard Boss (1934-1939), control analyst: Gustav Bally. This entire period is overshadowed by the events in Germany and their consequences in Switzerland.

1936 Loss of German citizenship for all German Jews living in foreign countries.

1938 Brother and family emigrate to Italy and - after the Jews there are expelled - to the USA. The mother has already emigrated to the USA before the "Reichskristallnacht" (burning of the synagogues).

1938 Marriage to her partner of many years, Hans-Helmut Cohn;he is of German-Jewish heritage and a student of medicine.

1939-40 Temporary employment permit as psychologist in Littenheid Asylum, a psychiatric clinic in St. Gallen, Switzerland; her husband is a doctor there.

2/2/1940 Birth of daughter, Heidi Ursula.

5/15/1940 The (false) alarm is sounded that the German army had crossed the Swiss border.

4/15/1941 Emigration to the USA.

1941-42 Training in Early Childhood Progressive Education at the Bankstreet School (later College) in New York City.

1941-44 Psychotherapeutic training, especially in the work of Harry Sullivan Stack at the William Alanson White Institute in New York, additional studies at the Columbia University, New York, Master's Degree (M.A.) and certification as psychologist.

1944-46 Hans-Helmut Cohn becomes staff doctor at the

Rockland State Hospital, New York State, a public psychiatric hospital with 7,000 patients. Ruth Cohn works in the psychological department, testing patients and doing therapy with children. After one year she takes a leave.

9/23/1944 Birth of son, Peter Ronald.

1946 Divorce from Hans-Helmut Cohn. R.C. moves with both children to Englewood, New Jersey; establishes a psycho-analytical practice in New York City; in the following years primarily devoted to the raising of her children.

1950 Acquaintance with A. Gus Woltman (Psychologist) who later is her partner, with whom she lives until 1963.

1956 Death of her mother.

1946-72 Private practice in psychotherapy in New York City, continuous distancing from classic psychoanalysis in the direction of experiental therapy.

1948 Theodor Reik founds the NPAP (National Psychological Association for Psychoanalysis) in opposition to the New York Institute for Psychoanalysis, which only admits medical doctors.

1949-73 Activities in building up the NPAP, teaching member and active in training programme.

1948-51 Training in group therapy with pioneers, such as Asya.

Kadis, Sandy Flowerman, Alexander Wolf, etc.

1955 R.C. Initiates a workshop with the theme "Counter Transference," whose methodical approach establishes the basis for the development of Experiential Therapy and Theme-Centered-Interaction (TCI).

1957-73 Teaching at the Centre for Psychotherapy (later

Centrefor Mental Health) in the Department for Group Therapy.

1962-73 Living and working in New York City after 1962 R.C. is active member of the American Academy of Psychotherapy, a meeting place for representatives of newer and classic psychotherapeutic methods, i.e., George Bach, Henry and Vivian Guze, Sidney Jourard, Fritz Perls, Ervin Polster, Carl Rogers, Virginia Satir, John Warkentin, Carl Whitaker.

1965-66 Additional training in gestalt therapy with Fritz Perls.

1966 Founding of the Workshop Institute for Living-Learning (WILL) New York, an institute for training, research and practice of TCI (Theme Centered Interaction).

1968 Invitation from Helmut Stolze to participate in a symposium about supervision in Vienna at the International Congress for Group Psychotherapy and contact there with Anneliese and Franz Heigl-Evers, Ingeborg Bojan von Plotho, Ilse Seglow. After that regular invitations to the Psychotherapy Weeks in Lindau, to Group Therapy Conferences in Bonn and to the Psychotherapy Institute in London. R.C. reduces private practice in New York in order to dedicate herself to building up TCI in the USA and Europe.

1971 Psychologist of the Year Award, awarded by the New York Society for Clinical Psychology.

8/27/1972 Founding of WILL-Europe in Zurich in lisabeth Bollag's house (died 1975).

1973 Closing of private practice in the USA, guest professor at Clark University, Massachusetts.

1973-74 Introduction of TCI in the Western-Palatinate-Coopera-tion- Model (WKM) in Vlotho, an organi-

sation founded by Werner Rietz and directed by Annedore Schultze for the Education of Youth, Teachers and Families, whose main emphasis is on the cooperation between parents and educational institutions.

1974 Return to Europe, since then residence of Hasliberg-Goldern, Switzerland, associated with the Ecole d'Humanité, a international boarding school for children and youth, where R.C. is consultant and responsible for introducing TCI among the staff and in the curriculum. Also, training workshops in TCI and private practice in gestalt and experiential therapy, consultation and supervision.

1979 Awarded the title of honorary doctor (Dr.phil.h.c.) by the Faculty of Psychology, University of Hamburg, Germany.

1986 Consolidation of regional and national WILL organisations into WILL-International.

1992 Awarded the Presidential Medal of Honour by the Federal Republic of Germany.

1994 Awarded the title of honorary doctor (Dr.phil.h.c.) by the Institute for Psychology of the Faculty for Philosophy and History of the University of Bern, Switzerland.

1994 Continues to live on the Hasliberg, Central Switzerland, in the summer months, otherwise with friend and WILL graduate, Helga Hermann, in Duesseldorf, Germany.

Chapter 27

TCI ORGANISATIONS

The name WILL stands for Workshop Institute for Living-Learning. WILL was founded in 1966 in the USA and in 1972 in Europe; since 1986 all regional WILL organisations have come together under the umbrella organisation of WILL INTERNATIONAL.

WILL-International is a confederation of more than 15 regional organisations called the WILL Regional Groups. In June, 2000, WILL-India was provisionally designated as a member of the WILL Regional Groups. Below are contact addresses.

For **WILL-International**

Office: c/o GAW
Mrs. Franziska Kolb
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Internet: http://www.tzi-forum.com (in English and German)

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P. John Britto

Executive Director of Indian Institute of Development, Author and Trainer in the development sector. M:A. in Journalism and Mass Communication, Thanjavur/Tamilnadu, India

Abe Brody

Psychotherapist. Colleague of Ruth Cohn's during the years she has developed TCI, New York (deceased).

Ruth C. Cohn

Dr. h.c. from Hamburg/Germany and Bern/Switzerland universities, Psychoanalyst and Educator, founder of the Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI) – see biographical notes.

Paul Dean

Educator and art therapist; Graduate Group Leader for TCI; Twickenham/Middelsex, Great Britain.

Irene Klein

Educator, Author; Graduate Group Leader for TCI since 1983; active in Continuing Education and Train the Trainer programmes, Freiburg/Germany

Mary Anne Kuebel

M.A.; educator and founder; TCI Diploma; active in promoting TCI internationally; Odenwald/Germany

Barbara Langmaack

Author and Counselor; Graduate Group Leader for TCI since 1979; active in coaching, leadership training and moderation in conflict situations; Hamburg/Germany

Father Kuriakose Mampilly

M.A. Theology, President Sevashram, Peechnikad/Kerala. Active in development sector.

Nishi Mitra

Senior Lecturer, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) focussing on Women's Issues, Mumbai/India.

Helga Modesto

Doctorates in philosophy and theology; University Lecturer, Graduate Group Leader for TCI since 1977, in recent years grass roots' work in Brazil and Siberia; Munich/Germany

Klaus-Volker Schuetz

Dr. theol.; protestant minister and church functionary; TCI Diploma; Mainz/Germany.

Dietrich Stollberg

Dr. phil.; Professor of Theology and Pastoral Psychology; Graduate Group Leader for TCI since 1978; Marburg/Germany.

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Living Learning

A Reader in Theme-Centered Interaction

Though the explosive changes in information technology have made the world shrink into a global village, the chasm in human ties has been widening. In this context, this work "Living Learning: A reader in Theme-Centered Interaction" edited by Mary Anne Kuebel becomes a meaningful, innovative guide for human relations, education and communication.

The book deals with an innovative concept Theme-Centered Interaction (TCI) is a very useful, effective and workable tool that can help one realise his/ her specific potential together with other individuals which is the basis of a successful life in society. The core work in this compilation of articles is that of Dr. Ruth C. Cohn, whose brainchild is TCI. In the various well-researched pieces in the book, one comes across a brilliant, excellent presentation of a motivational subject that can change the outlook of many a man.

Mary Anne Kuebel, M.A. in English and Pedagogical Science, was born in Ohio/USA in 1934. Her career in Education has emphasised the value of learning in group situations. She is the Founder Director of the Odenwald Institute for Personal Pedagogy, the largest institution of this kind in Europe. She is trained in TCI (Diploma) and is a good friend as well as authorised translator of Ruth Cohn's. In 1994 she started her Foundation for Young Families. She serves as a consultant to WILL-India since its founding in 1999. Since 1971 she has been living in Germany, married to the entrepreneur Karl Kuebel. She has 3 children and 5 grandchildren.

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